Gloria orders release of 49 political prisoners

STORY ON PAGE A2

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2001 ★ 36 PAGES 3 SECTIONS VOL.16 NO. 74 ₱15

2 senators, groups buck Reyes at DND

By Juliet L. Javellana

TWO senators yesterday expressed reservations about President Macapagal-Arroyo's reported plan to give outgoing Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Angelo Reyes the defense portfolio.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, who once served as AFP chief of staff, said that while Reyes was a

2 SENATORS/ A13

WHAT'S INSIDE
- Iraqis fire at US, UK jets WORLD / A9
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- Roco admits graft at DECS NEWS / A3
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ROGER MARGALLO

DE LOS SANTOS: Beneficiary of 3-cornered fight?

Jockeying generals may cancel each other out

By Carlito Pablo and Armand N. Nocum

ACTING Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita yesterday confirmed the ongoing jockeying among military factions over the post of the next Armed Forces chief of staff, but downplayed the intense lobbying as "normal."

But Camp Aguinaldo insiders speculated that the lobbying efforts of supporters of the top three contenders could backfire, and benefit a fourth officer who himself is reportedly being more quietly endorsed by his patrons within the Macapagal administration.

The insiders said that the intense jockeying could result in Marine Lt. Gen. Edgardo Espinosa, Vice Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Jose Calimlim, and Army Chief Lt. Gen. Diomedio Villanueva being passed over altogether in the selection process.

And the fourth officer who may benefit in such a case, according to the insiders, is AFP Deputy Chief Lt. Gen. Jaime de los Santos, former overall commander of the United Nations Transition Authority for East Timor and currently the third highest ranking officer in the AFP.

But Ermita, a former general, tried to douse speculation, saying, "in the final analysis, it will be the President who will

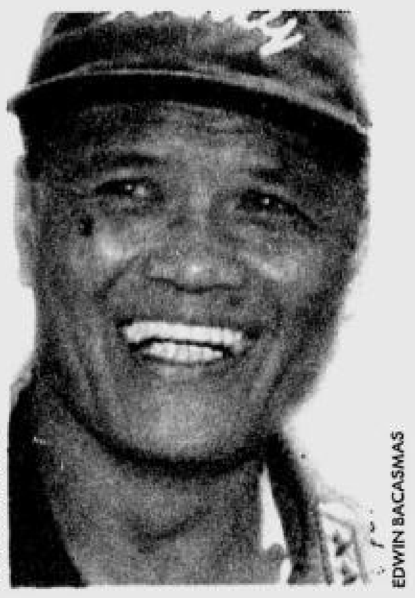
JOCKEYING/ A13

ERIK ARAZAS

CALIMLIM: FVR'S bet?

EDWIN BACASMAS

ESPINOSA: Chavit's choice?



EDWIN BACASMAS

VILLANUEVA: Reyes' pick?

Laarni's ₱650M revealed

OPLAN JUDGMENT DAY

2 military subplots in the works as crowd gathered on Edsa

By Dodi Limcaoco

(Last of two parts)

Editor's note: This is the conclusion of a personal narrative by Conrado "Dodi" Limcaoco of the events in the camp of the United Opposition leading to the fall of former President Joseph Estrada. Limcaoco, former President Corazon Aquino's liaison with the civil movement, was deeply involved in "Oplan Judgment Day," an opposition plan to compel Estrada to step down in the event of his acquittal by the Senate impeachment court.

TWO serious military subplots or tracks, running parallel to the Judgment Day Plan, were well in the works as the crowd gathered at the Edsa Shrine to protest the Senate's vote on Jan. 16 to block key evidence in Joseph Estrada's impeachment trial.

Marine Lt. Gen. Edgardo Espinosa, former chief of the Southern Command, and his men had early on presented their option, the first track, to the opposition.

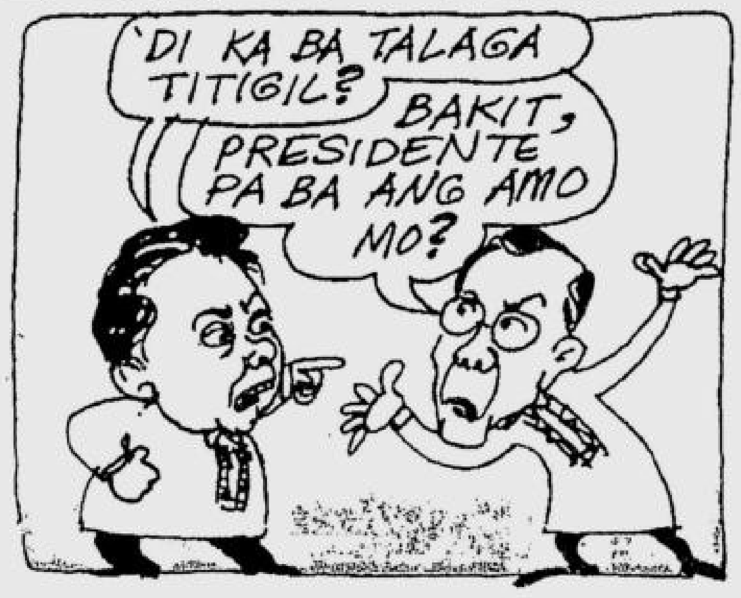
They had the support of Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson and many Ilocano officers in the Armed Forces.

Initially, the Espinosa group was ready to make its move at 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 20. It later attempted to synchronize with the projected Sunday launch of the Judgment Day Plan, until AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Angelo Reyes preempted all other plans by withdrawing his support for Estrada on that fateful Friday.

In essence, the plan of Espinosa's group called for a substantial number of officers and soldiers to come out of the camps to join and protect a large anti-Estrada demonstration on Edsa, and to declare themselves in support of then Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and the people.

The planners coordinated first with Copa or the Council on Philippine Affairs, a group acknowledged to have played a major role

2 MILITARY/ A4



'DI KA BA TALAGA TITIGIL?
BAKIT, PRESIDENTE PA BA ANG AMO MO?

Gag Desierto, Erap begs high court

By Rocky Nazareno

OUSTED President Joseph Estrada has had enough of Ombudsman Aniano Desierto, and he wants his tormentor gagged.

Estrada's lawyer, former Sen. Rene Saguisag, yesterday asked the Supreme Court to stop Desierto from talking to the media on various criminal cases filed against his client.

In an eight-page motion, Saguisag cited news reports in which the Ombudsman referred to Estrada as "former President" and suggested the disgraced leader amassed ill-gotten wealth.

Desierto dismissed Saguisag's petition as "absurd" and "irrelevant," saying he would continue to report developments of the investigation for the sake of full transparency.

GAG/ A14

Prober says that at one time, she deposited P80M

By Michael Lim Ubac and Martin P. Marfil

LAARNI Enriquez, one of the mistresses of ousted President Joseph Estrada, has a P650-million bank account with the Philippine Savings Bank (PS Bank), Ombudsman Aniano Desierto disclosed yesterday.

His disclosure came as Misamis Oriental Rep. Oscar Moreno warned that Estrada might have transferred funds from his bank accounts to various stockbrokerage firms to prevent the Ombudsman from tracing them.

Moreno, a member of the House prosecution panel in the impeachment trial of Estrada, said that the transfers could involve "hundreds of millions of pesos."

Desierto said the P650-million bank account was uncovered after PS Bank officials turned over the statements of account of Enriquez, a former movie starlet, to his office yesterday.

Bank records show that Enriquez deposited a total of P650 million into her account within a period of one year.

A member of the Ombudsman's Special Preliminary Investigation Panel said there was something unusual about the amounts deposited by Enriquez into her account.

"Aside from the fact that the amount is so immense and that she is unemployed, the bank records showed that Enriquez deposited about P70 million to P80 million at one time," said the panel member, who asked not to be identified.

Following the lead of Equitable Bank and five other banks, PS Bank turned over to the Office of the Ombudsman its records of Enriquez and Estrada's other mistress, Guia Gomez, after it was issued a subpoena by Desierto.

"But the Special Preliminary Investigation Panel has yet to inform me of the total amount of deposits of Gomez with the bank," Desierto said.

Early last week, the International Exchange Bank, Metrobank, Security Bank and Trust Co., Asia United Bank and the United Coconut Planters Bank turned over the statements of account of Estrada, Gomez and Enriquez to the Ombudsman.

Desierto subpoenaed Estrada's bank records since these would serve as evidence in the complaint for forfeiture filed by private prosecutors and 82 "People Power II"

LAARNI'S/ A14

Barbers back from throat surgery in US

By TJ Burgonio and Christine Avendaño

SEN. Robert Barbers, who missed out on the historic impeachment trial of ousted President Joseph Estrada, flew in yesterday from the United States where he underwent throat surgery four months ago.

"I'm glad to be back," Barbers told reporters at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport in a barely audible voice. His wife Virginia and mother Regina were with him on Philippine Airlines flight PR 103 from Los Angeles that touched down shortly before 6 a.m.

Among those who collected them at the airport were his sons, Lyndon and Robert Ace, a congressman. Barbers, who had his infected tonsils removed at the Missouri Hospital, said he had been advised by his doctors not to talk too much.

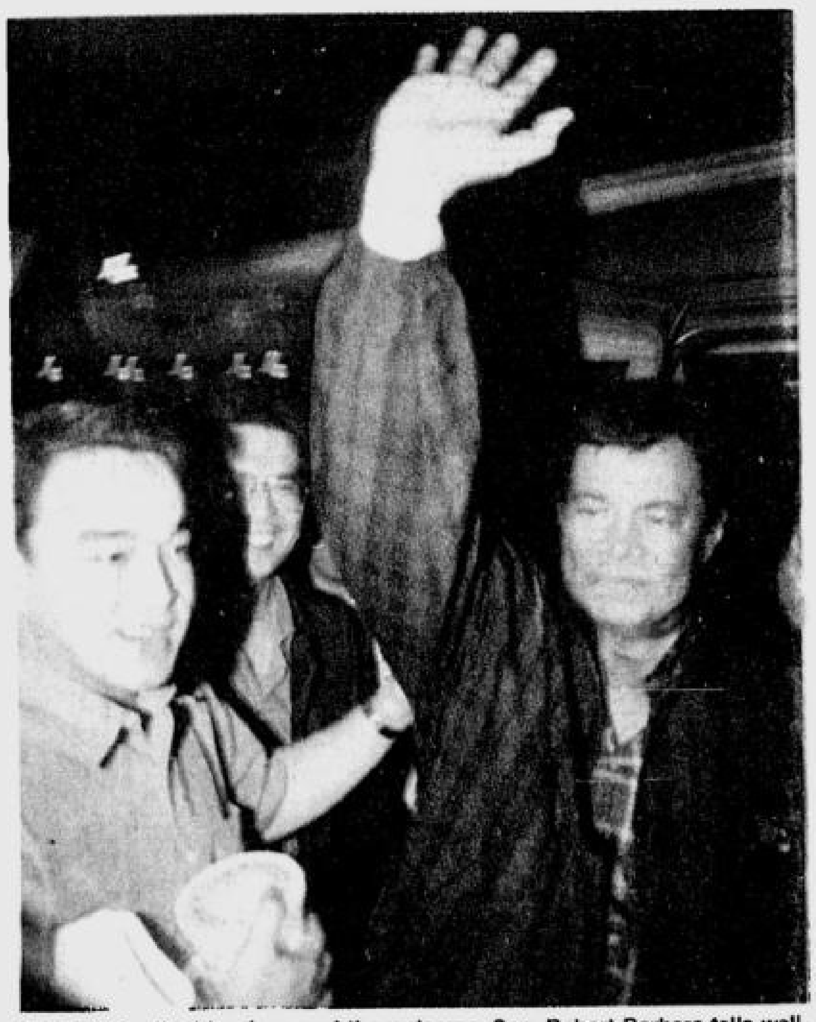
He said he was expected to regain his normal voice in two months. He hinted that by that time, he would be ready to campaign for his colleagues in Lakas who are seeking reelection in the Senate, as well as for Lyndon, who is reportedly running for governor in their home province of Surigao del Sur.

"It feels so good to be back and I am very happy to be with my whole family, my friends and supporters again," Barbers said in a statement he issued to Senate reporters later in the day.

"I want to thank all of them for being around to welcome me back home. Most of all, I am thankful to the Almighty Father for all His help and abundant blessings," he said.

He also expressed support for the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo and her appointment of Gen. Leandro Mendoza as acting chief of the Philippine National Police.

BARBERS/ A14



THANKS for the blessings and the welcome, Sen. Robert Barbers tells well-wishers at the airport, including his son Rep. Ace Barbers. ROGER MARGALLO

FIRST STORM OF 2001

'Auring' slams South; 18 dead

By Vicente Labro
PDI Visayas Bureau
and Jowel F. Canuday
PDI Mindanao Bureau

AT LEAST 18 people died and some 100,000 were driven from their homes in the Visayas and Mindanao as a result of landslides, floods and big waves caused by "Auring," the country's first tropical storm this year, disaster officials yesterday said.

Before hitting land in Eastern Visayas on Sunday, Auring dumped heavy rains over a large area of Mindanao last week.

Floods hit Leyte, Davao Oriental, Davao del Norte, Compostela Valley, Agusan del Sur and Surigao del Sur.

A landslide crushed to death on Sunday six people in Sitio Cagabaca, Barangay Balinsasayaw in Abuyog, Leyte, 80 kilometers south of Tacloban.

Three days before, eight people died in a landslide at a mining pit in Mt. Diwalwal in Monkayo, Compostela Valley.

Damage to crops and property has been placed at more than P200 million.

As of 4 p.m. yesterday, the center of Auring was at the northwestern coast of Aklan, 100 km southeast of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro.

Packing sustained winds of 45 kph near the center, the storm is moving toward northern Palawan and southern Mindoro at 15 kph. It is forecast to be over the South China Sea by noon today.

Jun Lagunzad of Leyte's Provincial Disaster and Coordinating Council (PDCC) identified the fatalities in the landslide as Vicente Dadap, his wife Cristina, their children Tyson and Dick Russel, and their nieces Karen and Rowena Villa-asis.

AURING/ A14

MALAKING TULONG 'TO SA PEACE TALKS !

Second FRONT PAGE

Gloria orders release of 49 political prisoners

By Rocky Nazareno
and Andrea Trinidad-Echavez

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has ordered the release of 49 of 250 political prisoners to speed up efforts to revive stalled peace talks with communist and separatist groups.

Justice Secretary Hernani Perez said the prisoners will be released "at the soonest possible time."

Perez chaired the special committee that evaluated the cases of "persons detained or convicted of crimes committed in furtherance of political beliefs or objectives."

Last Friday, the committee, with acting Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita and Interior Secretary Joey Lina as members, recommended to Ms Macapagal the release of the prisoners to "strengthen confidence buildup with the communist National Democratic Front and the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front."

Long process

However, assistant chief state prosecutor Nilo Manano said the prisoners' release could take time.

He said most of the prisoners have pending cases in the provinces and their resolution would have to be coordinated with local officials.

"Their lawyers would have to file motions to dismiss the charges after which we would ask the fiscals not to oppose them," Mariano said.

Ordered released were Belmar Jamil, Lumalinda Daan, Orestes Amper, Nancy Cabug, Florenda Pinon, Gregorio Alemania, Kim Michael Virador, Romeo Pialan, Romualdo Munez, Aleson Alcantara;

Arnulfo Canedo, Irene Valencia, Charlie Gruta, Greggo Dano, Vincent Golloso, Joey Ramos, Joselito Magday, Neptali Aliganza, Sofronio Seriosa, William Ginon;

Emma Calderon, Jessie Lipura, Emma Montoya, Ronnie Fajilagot, Virgilio Mario, Rustico Mijares, Walter Ortega, Crescencio Villarubia, Akmad Tonto Abdul, Brayan Alpha;

Abdullah Butuan, Nardo Ebus, Santiago Kandungan, Mosib Mibpantao Kiram, Suharto Maging, Alimuden Tumindeg Usman, Noel Abdul Mamaluba, Alvin Mangco, Arnel Masin y Guiana, Abdul Abdin Muhammad;

Macalma Mundas, Christopher Pastor, Meno Mendoza Pelayo, Datu Amirol Samad, Datu Amurlo Samad, Bhuts Elis Sangue, Abash Lagaya Sinomadal, Masukat Tambi, Masukat Tumindeg Tambi and Rene Tumindeg.

Bombing suspects

Included in the list were the 19 Muslim residents of Maharlika Village in Taguig, Rizal who were arrested for the mall bombings that hit Metro Manila last year.

Beginning Thursday, some 100 political detainees nationwide will stage a hunger strike to demand the immediate release of all 250 prisoners jailed because of their political beliefs.

The hunger strike, according to the human rights group Karapatan, will be the first in a series of events aimed at compelling the Macapagal administration to make good its promise to release the detainees.

On Friday, the militant women's group Gabriela will stage a rally at Mendiola to push for the release of 11 women political prisoners as well as 12 minors who are in government custody.

Marie Hilao-Enriquez, Karapatan secretary general, said the activities will be capped by a march to Mendiola to be participated in by the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, Karapatan, KMP and other militant groups.

US meddling

She said groups will also picket the US Embassy on Roxas Boulevard to protest American intervention in the release of the political detainees.

The US Embassy is opposed to the release of Juanito Itaas and Donato Continente, convicted killers of American Col. James Rowe, US military coordinator in the Philippines in 1991.

Ermita denied that the prisoner release was a "quid pro quo" for the release of two government men being held by the New People's Army.

The two, Army Maj. Noel Buan and Police Insp. Abelardo Martin, have been held by communist rebels almost two years.

"It's not because we want the two guys released," Ermita said yesterday in Camp Aguinaldo.

"We want to build confidence between the two sides," said Ermita. "This is our way of telling them that we are sincere in pursuing the peace talks."

Negotiations between the government and the communists and the separatist MILF broke down during the Estrada administration when the former president insisted on following a hawkish policy against the two dissident groups.

With Carlito Pablo and AP reports

GMA marks 1st month in Palace

By Donna S. Cueto

MARKING her first month in office, President Macapagal-Arroyo said she was proud of what she has accomplished so far, despite the highly unusual circumstances that attended her assumption to office.

"I think we were able to accomplish many things," she said, recalling the day exactly one month ago when she took her oath at the Edsa Shrine after Joseph Estrada was driven from Malacañang.

Ms Macapagal pointed out that in other countries, there is usually a six-week transition period "between the time the winner is proclaimed and the time he begins governing," during which the leader is expected to complete his Cabinet.

"I did not have that time. I had nothing. I took my oath only four weeks ago and yet look at how much has been accomplished," she said. "I have practically completed my Cabinet."

She said that in the positions that remain vacant, competent officers-in-charge are handling their jobs "very well."

She also said she has named a Vice President, Sen. Teofisto Guingona Jr., as well as the members of the government panels that will talk peace with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the National Democratic Front.

"So I think we were able to accomplish in four weeks what one might expect us to finish in two, maybe three months," Ms Macapagal said.

A religious organization, however, which took part in the actions that brought Ms Macapagal to power, said yesterday she has yet to show something substantial for her first month in office.

Fr. Jose Dizon, convenor of the religious group Kairos, said the President has failed to deliver on the promises she made to the various societal groups she met with prior to the ouster of Estrada.

"She is so busy placing military men in government posts that the people's basic demands for decent wages, jobs and alleviation from poverty have been neglected," Dizon said in a statement.

"The people are closely watching her. What now?" Dizon said.

With Norman Bordadora

Canada vows $10-M aid to Mindanao

CANADA will pour nearly $10 million in aid into strife-torn Mindanao, Canada's secretary of state for Asia and the Pacific said Monday.

Rey Pagtakhan, who was born in the Philippines, called on President Macapagal-Arroyo and later told reporters the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) will spend 60 percent of its budget for the country this year in Mindanao, according to the Agence France Presse.

CIDA officials in Manila said $16.3 million has been earmarked in aid for the Philippines this year, with about $9.8 million going to various projects, including livelihood programs, in the south.

Pagtakhan, a University of the Philippines graduate who immigrated to Canada in 1968, also paid tribute to Filipinos for showing the world "how a peaceful popular uprising against corrupt leaders was possible."

"Edsa people power is a Filipino creation and we'd like to pay tribute to that," Pagtakhan told reporters at the Department of Foreign Affairs yesterday afternoon.

He also said he remained "impressed" by the unchanging hospitality of the Filipinos.

He said that since his last visit to the country with Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien and the "Team Canada" trade mission three years ago, Filipino hospitality "has not changed," while the urban landscape has, citing the increase in population and the traffic problem, "which is natural."

After his meeting with Ms Macapagal in the morning, where he conveyed the Canadian government's support for her administration, Pagtakhan met in the afternoon with Vice President and Foreign Affairs Secretary Teofisto Guingona Jr. where they discussed "general issues" on trade and Filipino migrants to Canada. *Dona Pazzibugan, with a report from AFP*

Singson immunity faces rough sailing

By Cathy Yamsuan,
Volt Contreras
and Juliet Javellana

FOR the risks he took and the information he gave to help pin down ousted President Joseph Estrada, Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson should be granted immunity from suit, according to the House prosecutors in the aborted impeachment trial.

But Singson faces formidable opposition from Senate President Aquilino Pimentel Jr. who said many are opposed to the grant of blanket immunity to the governor.

Reacting to President Macapagal-Arroyo's open support for giving immunity to Singson, Pimentel said yesterday: "I'm not too sure that she carries a unanimity of opinion among legislators regarding that matter. I think there are people who still object to (giving) a blanket immunity to Mr. Singson."

In any event, the Office of the Ombudsman said the issue is still under study and has created a special panel to do it.

According to Ombudsman Aniano Desierto, one of the factors to consider is if Singson was "not the most guilty" among the accused in the criminal cases against Estrada.

He said the panel would also examine whether Singson's testimony against Estrada can be corroborated and whether "it is absolutely necessary for the prosecution of the case."

Singson, who used to be a close friend and gambling buddy of Estrada, was forced to reveal what he knew concerning Estrada's links to illegal gambling after narrowly escaping what he feared was an assassination attempt.

"Chavit deserves it (immunity)," said Pampanga Rep. Oscar Rodriguez, one of the 11 congressmen in the prosecution panel of the aborted impeachment trial.

"After exposing his safety and that of his family, after staking his political future and even his economic stability . . ., Chavit should be granted immunity. He put a lot on the line just to let everybody know the truth," Rodriguez said.

Western Samar Rep. Antonio Eduardo Nachura, a law professor, said the government should consider granting Singson "transactional immunity".

This kind of immunity, Nachura said, "will grant Singson immunity from prosecution for any offense to which his testimony relates."

Nachura explained that the Constitution authorizes the Commission on Human Rights, for instance, to grant immunity to persons whose testimonies "are necessary to arrive at the truth in matters being investigated by the court."

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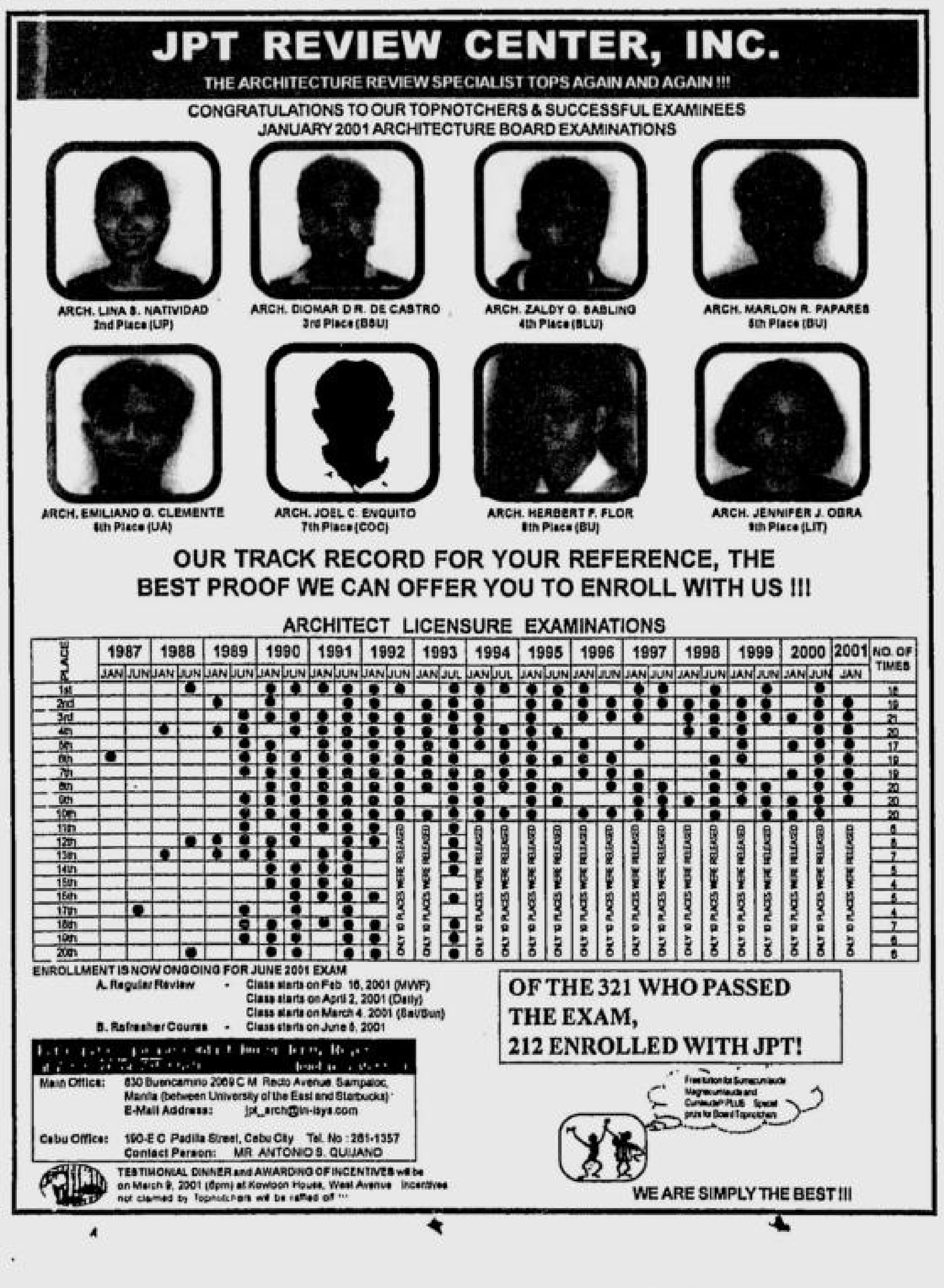
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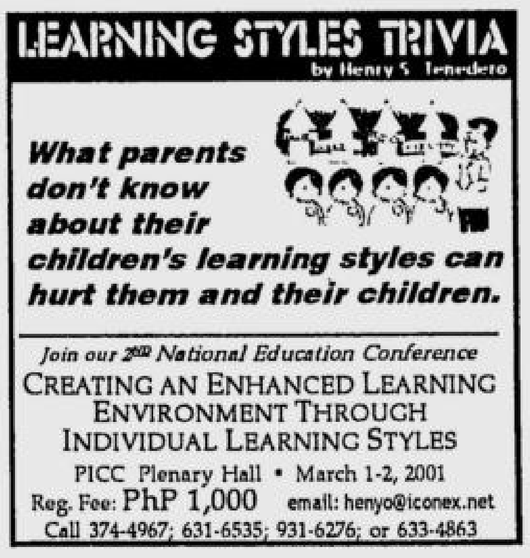
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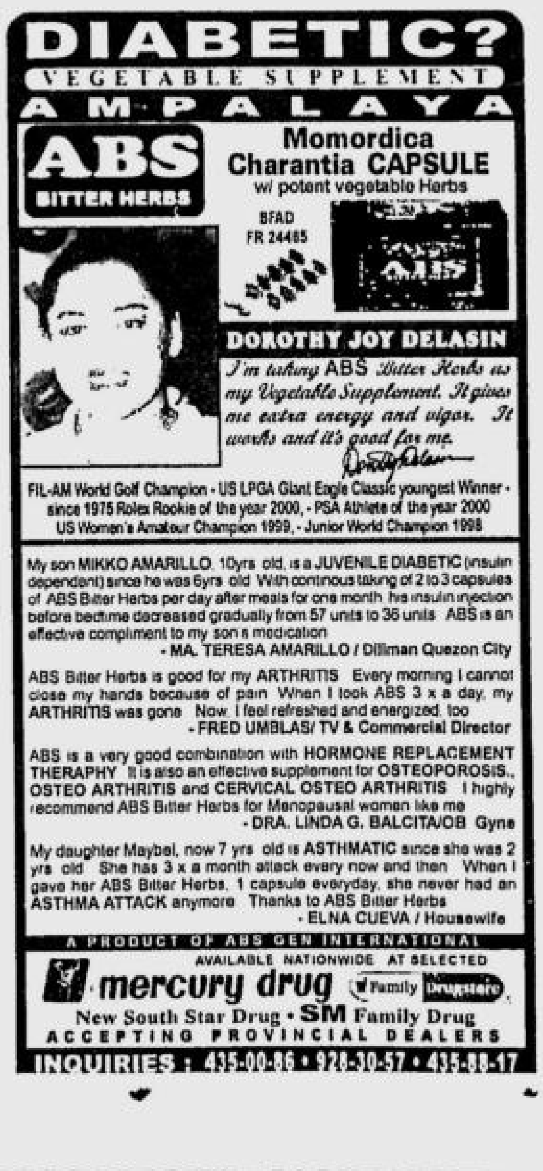
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Roco admits DECS is indeed graft-ridden

By B. S. Rivera

ON only his fourth day as chief, Education Secretary Raul Roco yesterday concluded that the Department of Education, Culture and Sports—which he had earlier defended from surveys tending to portray the DECS as one of the country's most corrupt agencies—is indeed engaged in "wholesale, institutionalized graft."

Roco expressed disgust over a policy allowing the DECS to collect two percent, or around P15 million monthly, from public schoolteachers as loan payments and other deductions, which are then remitted to private companies.

In a press conference yesterday, an indignant Roco said he would review all contracts with lending institutions and work to revise the law authorizing the DECS to make the deductions, turn in the money to private companies and then receive a two percent "service fee" for the task.

The DECS remits as much as P200 million monthly to only one agency. Most of the deductions go to lending institutions, insurance companies and small rural banks that provide loans to teachers.

Surprised

"Can you imagine a government agency being authorized to deduct for private entities?" Roco said, adding he himself was "surprised" to learn that the General Appropriations Act allows the DECS to perform this service for the private agencies.

"I don't want DECS to do that. Why should we collect for them? How lucky can they (the private companies) be!" he said. "We are effectively exploiting teachers; that's wrong."

Every month, the DECS deducts a specific amount from teachers' salaries for remittances to at least 126 private companies. The information on how much the deductions should be for a certain period are contained in computer discs that the firms supply the DECS.

The records submitted to the DECS, however, do not have a detailed list of the basis for the deductions or the status of individual teachers' payments, a fact that Roco considers "scandalous."

The DECS' participation in the questionable payment scheme makes the agency a party to the exploitation of public schoolteachers who get only around one-fourth of their salaries due to debts and deductions, he stressed.

Wholesale graft

"I find it oppressive," he said. "It looks like wholesale institutionalized graft to me. We should change that."

Roco said he would study the DECS' contracts with the lending institutions and banks, and check the legal basis for various deductions other than the usual remittances to the Government Service Insurance System, Social Security System and Medicare.

The absence of records to prove the validity of the deductions makes the DECS unable to account for the deductions when faced with complaints from teachers, who claim they have long paid their dues.

"Since this has been going on for 10 years, it has become automatic," Roco said. "Even the people here are surprised 'when teachers complain, but we have no papers. I don't have records . . . I don't know how in heaven's name we can allow that."

A portion, amounting to roughly P6 million, of the DECS' P15-million monthly collections goes to incentives for teachers while the rest is placed in a Provident Fund, which is used to help teachers' cooperatives.

But Roco insisted that the public schoolteachers need a direct increase in their take-home pay more than the incentives given only to selected individuals for meritorious performance of their tasks or loyalty in the service.

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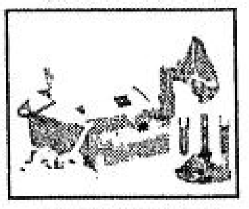

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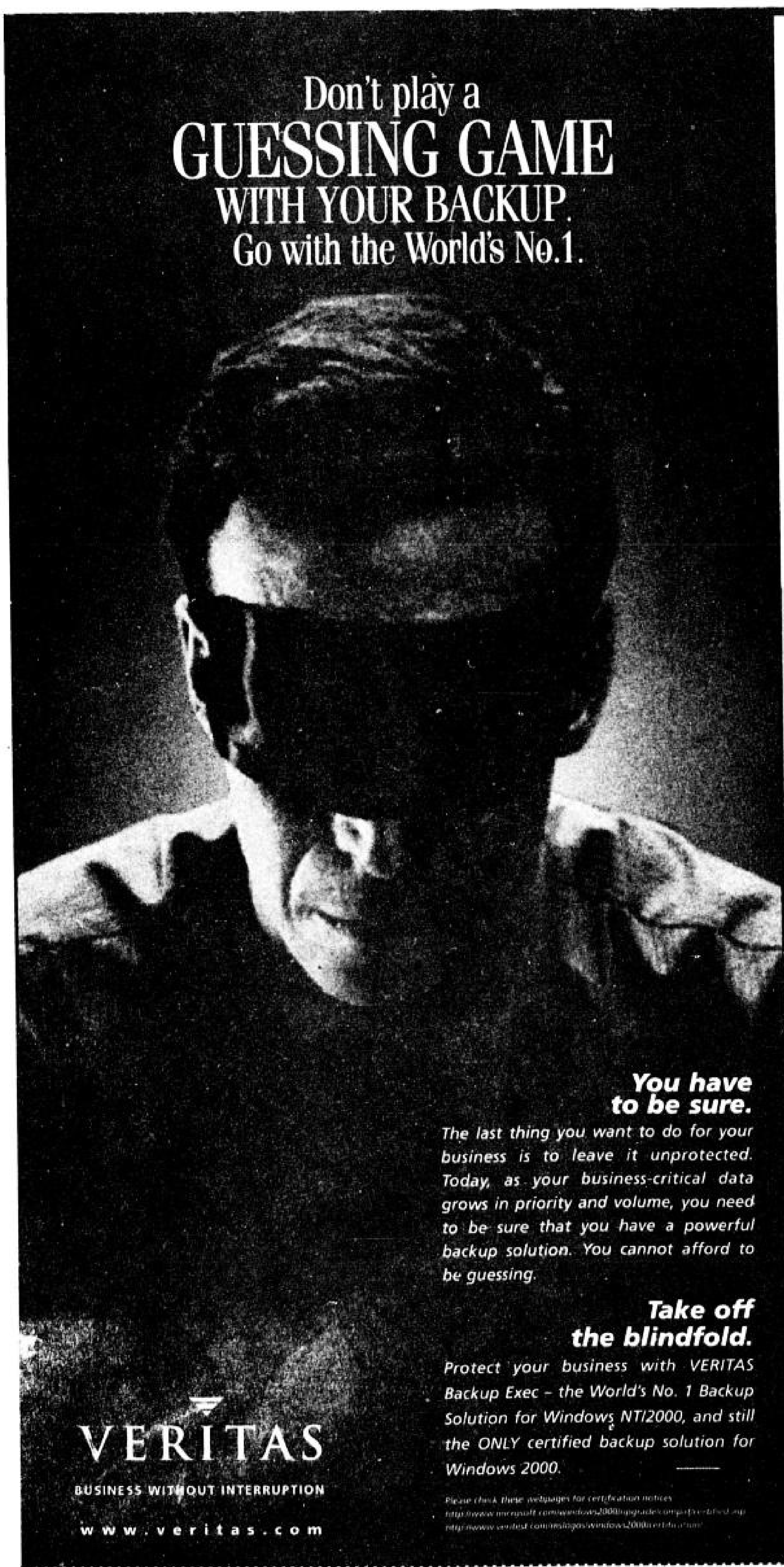

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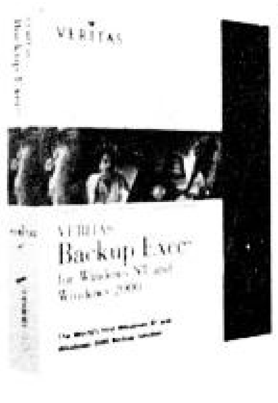

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CARDINAL SIN

2 military subplots as crowd gathered on Edsa

(From page A1)

in the Singson exposés and in helping organize a number of the anti-Estrada rallies.

The Espinosa group later met with several central figures in the United Opposition. There were questions raised about the subplot, but until the very last moment, the military group tried to coordinate with the United Opposition.

Reyes led what turned out to be the successfully executed second military track: bringing the entire leadership of the AFP to support People Power II.

It is worth noting that General Espinosa's plan may have reinforced General Reyes' resolve to defect, as he would have been faced with a difficult situation if Espinosa had acted before he did.

Still, many say that in that eventuality, Reyes would have stood with the people anyway by joining Espinosa, or by not responding to orders to engage the latter's troops on Edsa.

The outcome would have been the same.

By Wednesday evening, serious concerns over the sustainability of the unfolding People Power phenomenon at the Edsa Shrine had been raised.

Quick resolutions to the crisis were being explored, including the two military plots, as Estrada conceivably could have just sat out the unfolding drama inside Malacañang eating *lechon* and drinking Chateau Petrous.

March to Mendiola

Another plan to bring matters to a head was a march to Mendiola by the crowd at the Edsa Shrine.

Aside from being near the seat of political power, Mendiola has always been the emotional center of the protest movement since the First Quarter Storm.

The theory was that the angry crowd would bring pressure to bear on Estrada, and that sympathetic police and military elements would not take violent action against the demonstrators, leaving only a demoralized Presidential Security Group to contemplate the defense of the beleaguered president.

Proponents of the march wanted to launch it either on Thursday and Friday, but many civil groups and the Catholic Church initially resisted, believing that the march would be premature, that it lacked consultation, and that it risked unnecessary violence.

Dilemma

Even on Saturday morning, when the march to Mendiola was finally launched at 6 a.m., spokespersons of the Catholic Church made repeated calls to stop the march.

Fr. Robert Reyes, a known leader of the street protest movement, was put in a dilemma when the two conflicting calls were made—one to march to Malacañang, and the other by his Church bosses to stay at the Edsa Shrine.

As a true soldier of the Church, he stayed at the Edsa Shrine, and later Saturday morning helped announce and organize the inaugural of President Macapagal-Arroyo, when it was decided that Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. would administer her oath of office at noon.

Crucial role

Recent accounts from inside Malacañang confirm that the Mendiola march on Saturday did play a role in pressuring Estrada into leaving Malacañang.

The angry, disciplined and sleepless thousands sent a clear message that unless Estrada left the Palace, he would have shared the fate of Benito Mussolini.

On Thursday morning, Jan. 18, after a series of brief meetings among key Church representatives and opposition leaders, a consensus was reached.

We decided to execute the Judgment Day Plan on Sunday, Jan. 21. A 3 p.m. Mass at the Edsa Shrine, to be concelebrated by Cardinal Sin and CBCP president Archbishop Orlando Quevedo, would be the trigger.

The plan went into full gear starting Thursday morning: Final disclosures to other players were made, instructions given, logistics and resources released, and operators sent out.

But as it turned out, the Sunday afternoon Mass became a thanksgiving Mass, with newly installed President Macapagal in attendance.

'Stand down'

If General Reyes had not crossed over that fateful Friday, the civilian-led People Power II would have triumphed regardless—but in the week that followed, with the unsung heroes of the Judgment Day Plan executing it.

The plan would have worked. The spontaneous popular uprising that was already gaining steam would have carried the plan to certain victory. The people were already outraged and out in large numbers nationwide.

The "stand down order" for the Judgment Day Plan was given only on Jan. 20, the Saturday evening after President Macapagal's inauguration.

This was because of reports that the situation was still volatile and unstable, particularly from Friday evening until the oath-taking Saturday noon.

Friday night into Saturday saw intense "exit talks" with the Estrada camp, Malacañang's request for a five-day transition period, and reports that certain military officers were questioning General Reyes on the wisdom of giving the presidency to Ms Macapagal.

3 things that helped

In retrospect, three things in particular helped ensure the success of People Power II:

Malacañang's strategic error in forcing a Senate vote to stop the opening of the second envelope, a blunder that incensed a nation.

The availability and use of technology, particularly cell phone texting and the Internet, to communicate, inform and mobilize.

Mass media, particularly television, while heavily influenced by the government, remained relatively free, feeding the public's political awareness.

We shed tears the very moment Senators Franklin Drilon, Loren Legarda-Leviste and company cried live on nationwide television.

When Sen. Tessie Aquino-Oreta was shown doing her infamous jig, our tears were replaced by outrage. And the outrage quickly turned into the resolve to oust a bad president.

In a political heartbeat, the people were out in the streets in a largely spontaneous outburst that did not wane as President Estrada's man Ernesto Maceda (his former impeachment spokesperson) had predicted.

Maceda was correct, in a sense. It was all over in five days—for his boss.

The youth

The youth most of all were a revelation. Before People Power II, they were seen as largely apathetic and apolitical, more concerned with their more mundane "*gimiks*" than anything else.

Little did we know they were only intently watching and waiting for the time to stand up and be counted.

The future of our nation is in their very good hands.

The spontaneous mobilization of the first night happened very fast. In less than three hours after the 9:30 Senate vote, there were citywide noise barrages, triggered by text messages, at about 11 p.m. Cardinal Sin called people to Edsa, and he celebrated a midnight Mass outside the Edsa Shrine in front of thousands.

At first, organizers could not keep up with the pace of events, even failing to provide an adequate sound system at the Edsa Shrine until the early hours of Wednesday morning. Sin said his first Mass at Edsa using a handheld rally bullhorn.

But by noon of Wednesday, organizers had redeemed themselves, setting up a command center and a good sound system, and keeping the Edsa Shrine rally program going on a 24-hour basis.

Similar outbursts were sustained in other cities across the country.

The nationwide character of the uprising compared to the largely Manila-based character of the 1986 People Power revolt, is the reason the term "People Power II" is more appropriate than "Edsa II."

Power above

I agree with the observation that the "final script" and "director's cut" of People Power II were made by a power above us all. No mortal could have planned and orchestrated the events as they actually unfolded.

Victory indeed has many fathers—for People Power II, the Lord above all, and the Filipino people who made it happen. Without discounting the efforts of organized groups who stood together on Edsa, it was the Lord's spirit moving in the largely spontaneous, unorganized, young and determined citizenry that made People Power II happen.

And I guess Cardinal Sin does have a "direct line" to heaven.

In the days when victory seemed unimaginable, he remained confident of the correctness of his moral call—and the certainty of victory.

He was one of the first to make the call for Estrada's resignation. He stayed the course and proved all doubting Thomases wrong again.

In his lifetime, Cardinal Sin has called the people out in support of two social revolutions, fifteen years apart. Former Presidents Cory Aquino and Fidel Ramos, too, never wavered in support of the crusade.

As Ms Macapagal has said, there is credit enough for everyone, including those who risked it all to execute the Judgment Day Plan.

Let us work to avoid a People Power III.

(Correction: In Mr. Limcaoco's article published yesterday, Roy Oliveros of the Federation of Free Workers was mistakenly identified as Roy Olivares. Our apologies to Mr. Oliveros.)

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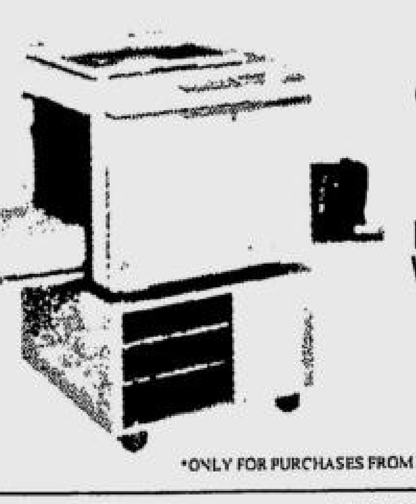

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NBI mum on Dacer probe

By M. Lim Ubac

TOP officials of the National Bureau of Investigation have kept mum on a report that the agency nabbed last week four policemen involved in the abduction of public relations practitioner Salvador "Bubby" Dacer.

The NBI officials said they could not confirm or deny the story because of a gag order issued by NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco.

The officials said Wycoco issued a memorandum barring NBI officials and agents from giving information to reporters on the Dacer case and even on other sensitive cases being handled by the agency.

But a highly placed source confirmed that the NBI is now closing-in on the suspects "but we have not arrested them."

Earlier, Wycoco admitted that policemen "from Northern Luzon" were being eyed as possible suspects in the abduction of Dacer and his driver, Manuel Corbito, on Nov. 24.

Wycoco, however, did not divulge the identities of the suspects.

The news blackout was ordered by Wycoco just a week after he assumed his post in January, the NBI officials said.

Both Deputy Director for Investigation Services Carlos Caabay and NBI-National Capital Region chief Samuel Ong admitted in an interview yesterday that the investigation on the Dacer case "is already in its crucial stage."

"Thus, I could not comment on that. Only the director can talk on the case," Caabay said. He said the six deputy directors were, ironically, not privy to the investigation being conducted by the NCR on the Dacer case.

Taking cue from Big 3, new players hike LPG prices

NEW oil companies have followed the lead of the oil majors, which on Saturday increased the prices of liquefied petroleum gas, mostly used for cooking, by an average of P16.50 per 11-kg cylinder.

Pryce Gases increased its LPG prices on Sunday, a day after Petron Corp. took the lead.

Total Petroleum Philippines, another new player, raised its prices, also by P16.50, at midnight yesterday.

The latest price increase brought the cost of an 11-kg cylinder of LPG to an average P265 to P275.

A top Pryce Gases official said the new players had no choice but to impose the price increase as they only follow the "Big Three" in setting prices.

"'We cannot compete with them by selling at lower prices," the official said in a telephone interview.

Oil company officials said they had to increase LPG prices to cope with the rising international prices of LPG over the past few months.

The Pryce Gases official said the new players have contributed much to the industry by helping eliminate the LPG shortage.

"We made LPG more readily available," the official said.

The new players have grabbed 40 percent of the local LPG market.

Along with Liquigaz, Total and Pryce Gases are some of the new entrants that are giving the Big Three oil majors stiff competition in the petroleum retail market.

The Petroleum Institute of the Philippines said contract prices of LPG in the world market now average $332.50 per metric ton in February compared to $296.50 in July last year, the last time LPG prices were increased.

The $36 increase of LPG contract prices does not include specific taxes and shipment costs.

Ronel Domingo

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, February 20, 2001
7th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Sir 2:1-11
Gospel: Mk 9:30-37

Jesus and his disciples made their way through Galilee; but Jesus did not want people to know where he was because he was teaching his disciples. And he told them, "The Son of Man will be delivered into human hands, They will kill him, but three days after he has been killed, he will rise." The disciples, however, did not understand these words and they were afraid to ask him what he meant.

They came to Capernaum and, once inside the house, Jesus asked them, "What were you discussing on the way?" But they did not answer because they had been arguing about who was the greatest.

Then he sat down, called the Twelve and said to them, "If someone wants to be first, let him be last of all and servant of all." Then he took a little child, placed it in their midst, and putting his arms around it he said to them, "Whoever welcomes a child such as this in my name, welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me, welcomes not me but the One who sent me."

Commentary:

School teachers would know that the mark of real intelligence manifests itself not so much in pupils who get the answers right, but in those who can admit that they do not know when they really don't, and dare to ask sensible questions in order to know. Mark is one rare gospel, which candidly portrays the stupidity of the disciples whose ignorance is coupled by ambitiousness and the cupidity to keep quiet even when they don't understand. People sometimes refuse to ask questions because they do not want to betray their ignorance, or are engaged only in power-playing as the disciples were. Children who do not have an image to protect nor an ulterior motive to pursue tend to ask many questions candidly. It is this childlike inquisitiveness which Jesus insists his disciples must never lose.

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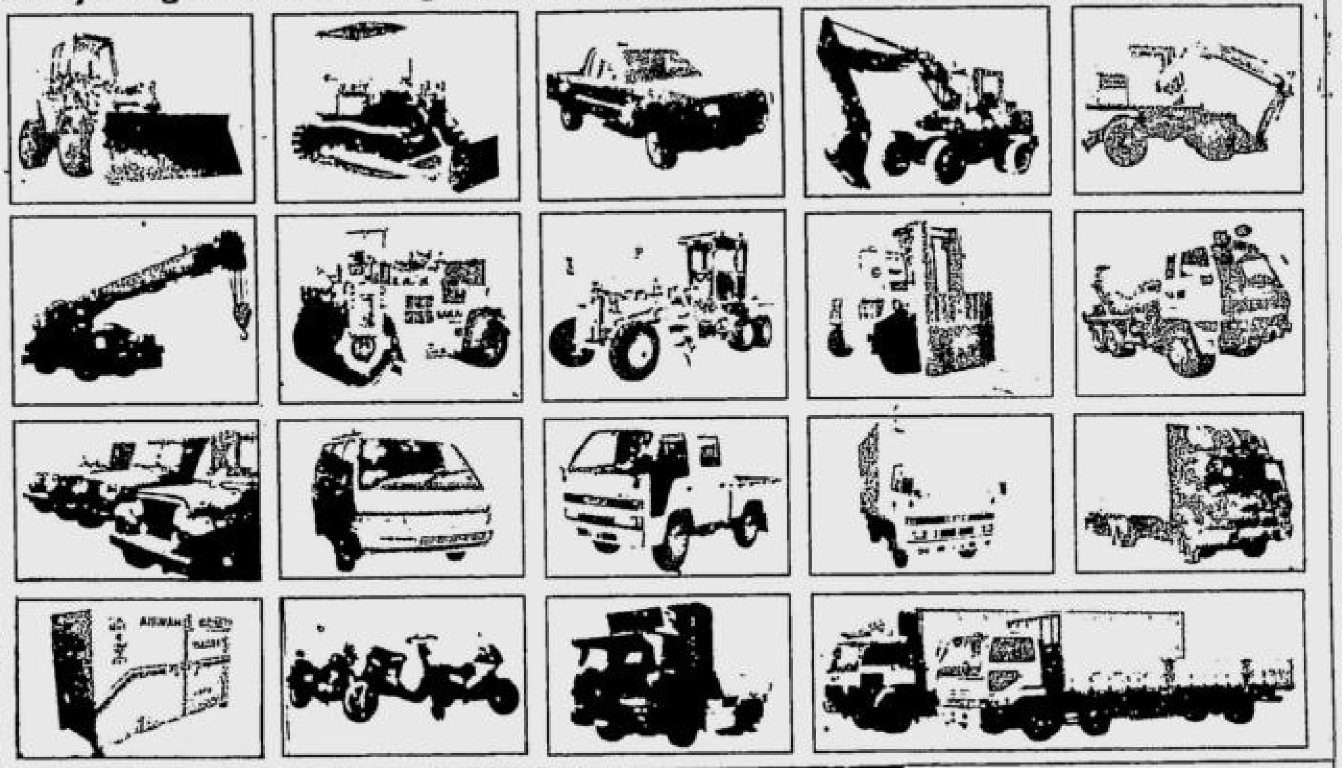

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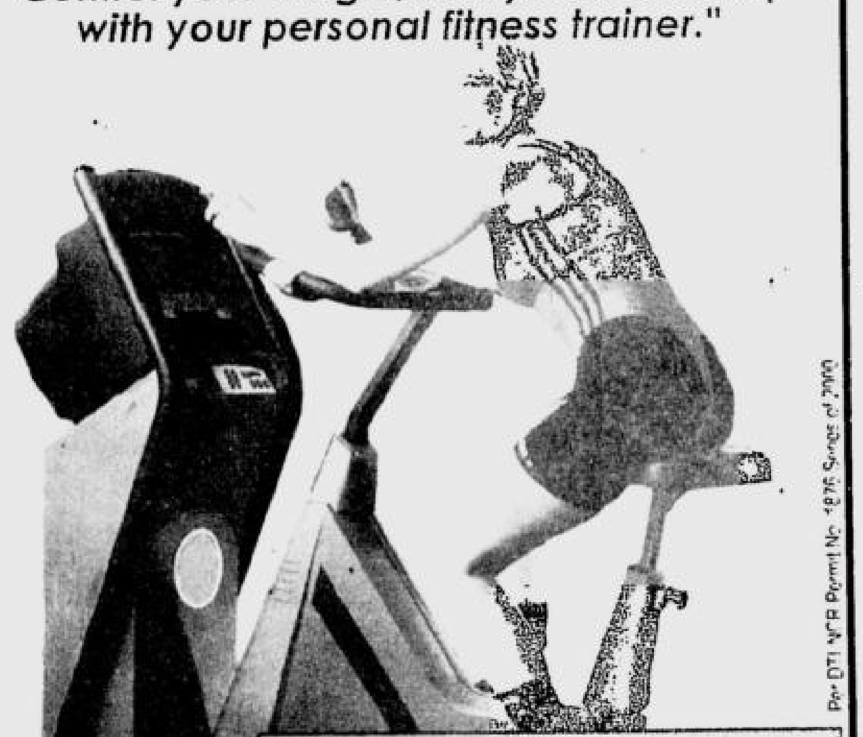

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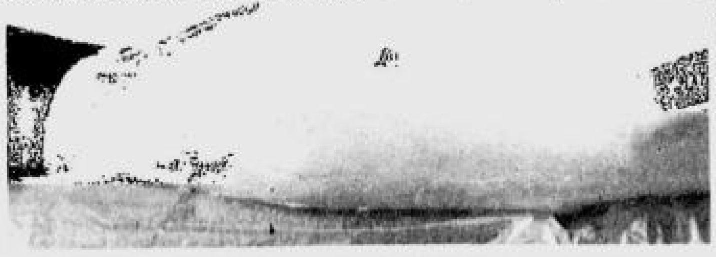

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OPINION

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Civil society's big task

EDITORIAL

CIVIL society played a big role in ousting a corrupt and incompetent president from Malacañang. But that was not the end of its work; it was just the beginning. Now it is called upon to continue its effort to prevent the election of unqualified people to the Senate, the House of Representatives and local elective posts.

Remember that it was as a mayor that Joseph Ejercito Estrada began his ascent to the presidency, winning election first to the Senate, and later, the vice presidency. It is not improbable that another ambitious but unqualified show-biz personality will take a similar route to ascend to the presidency. This civil society has to prevent from happening again.

A campaign to be undertaken by civil society will have a positive stream and a negative one. In the positive stream the civil society groups will have to draw up a list of criteria for the candidates that they believe should be elected. And using these criteria, civil society will then have to endorse its chosen candidates and probably even campaign for them.

Civil society was able to elect certain candidates to high offices in the past. Corazon C. Aquino was one of them. One of the images that remains in the minds of people of the 1986 snap presidential election was that of Chino Roces, publisher of the pre-martial law Manila Times, pushing a cart, soliciting one-peso contributions for the campaign fund of Cory Aquino. A puny effort, to be sure, in the face of the billions of pesos used for the reelection bid of the dictator Ferdinand E. Marcos, but an effort, taken together with the widow's mites contributed by the other sectors of civil society, that paid off in the end.

Another example is that of Rene Saguisag, a financially disadvantaged candidate for senator who was adopted as its own by civil society. He won in the 1987 senatorial election without spending a single centavo of his own.

We are sure that from the scores of candidates for senator and congressman and the thousands of candidates for local posts there are those who stand out in terms of qualifications from the rest and who deserve the people's mandate. They could get buried under the glitter and glamour of show biz and media candidates who may not be qualified for certain elective positions. It is the obligation of civil society to pick out these deserving people, to make them known to the electorate and to campaign for them. This job should not be left to the political parties alone.

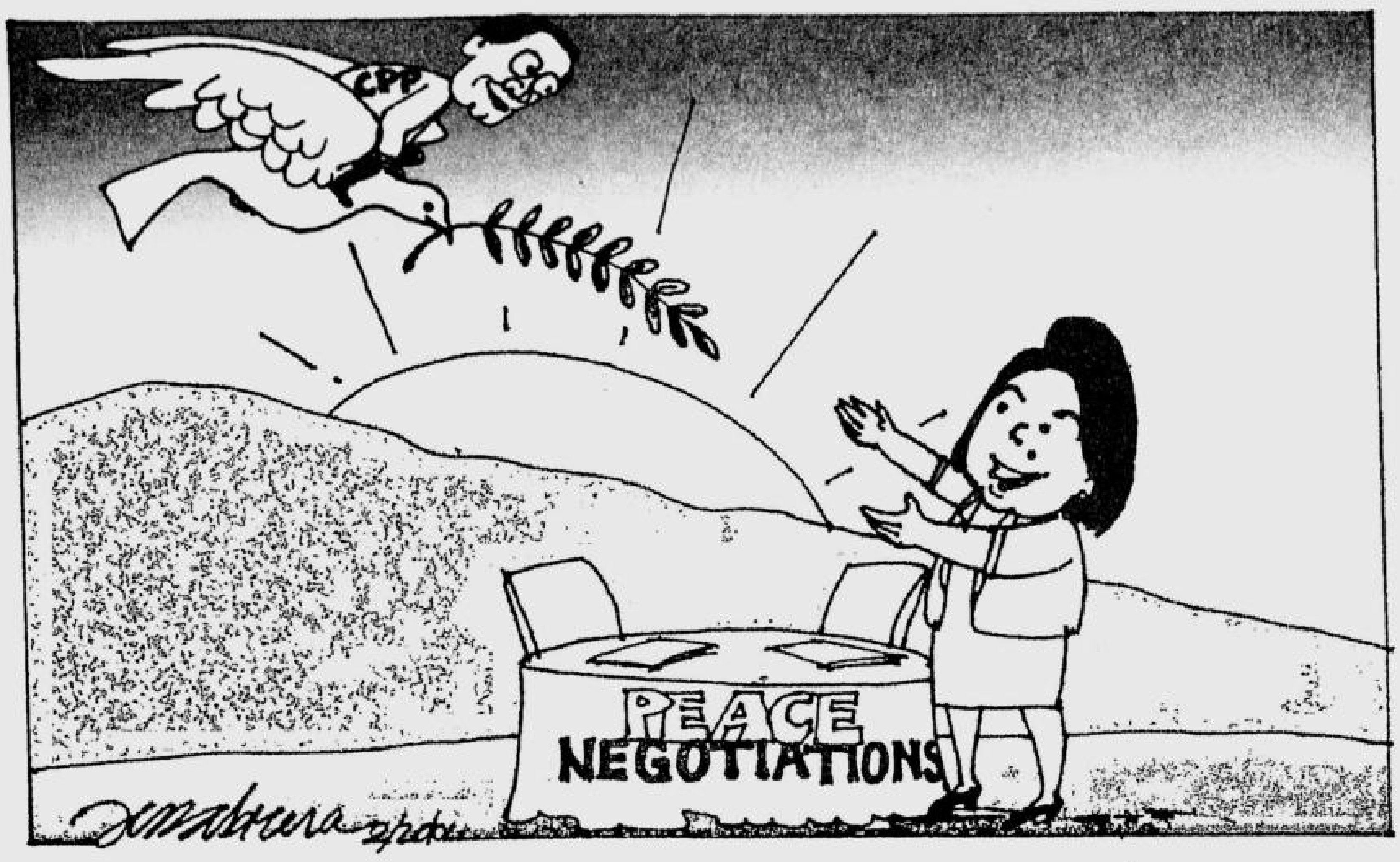
Edsa People Power I and II have shown that civil society has a task bigger than just deposing tyrannical or corrupt presidents. It has the task also of ensuring that the election of such personalities is not repeated. And it can begin by nipping in the bud the electoral dreams of ambitious but unqualified men and women.

On the negative stream, civil society's efforts could focus, for instance, on campaigning against the candidacies of show-biz personalities who have no qualification for public positions except their media exposure, popularity, name recall and so-called "winnability." We do not say that all show-biz personalities are incompetent or unfit for public office. But civil society should guide voters in choosing show-biz personalities who have a good record in governance.

There are show-biz and media personalities who have nothing to offer the people but their tinseltown names and the glamour of their "star" qualities. We do not need "stars" in Congress and in the provincial capitols and the town halls of the country. We need men and women who have integrity, who have intellectual and moral qualification for government positions and who have the commitment to work for the interest of the people.

We have had a bad experience with actor Joseph Ejercito Estrada. We still have mediocrities, members of the committee on silence and non-performance in the Senate like Senators Ramon Revilla, Robert Jaworski and Vicente (Tito) Sotto. The Senate impeachment trial brought into sharp focus the lack of qualification of these people for parliamentary work in a Senate that was once graced by the presence of such giants as Manuel L. Quezon, Claro M. Recto, Lorenzo M. Tañada, Jose W. Diokno, Lorenzo Sumulong, Gil J. Puyat and Arturo M. Tolentino.

The Filipino nation does not lack for people who are qualified for legislative and local executive positions. We do not have to elect mediocrities who make a mess of government and of the nation. Civil society can help pick out and work for the election of the right people. The 2001 election campaign, coming right after Edsa People Power II, is the auspicious time to do this.



256 trees and palms will be massacred

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

IF I were Erap, I would donate the Boracay mansion to the Bureau of Prisons—on one condition, that he would be the prisoner there. So that the bureau would not have to spend for its costly unkeep, part of the spacious grounds could be leased to Pagcor for a casino. Then he could plead guilty to the plunder charge to reduce the death penalty to life imprisonment. Then he would live out the rest of his life in luxury, comfort and pleasure, protected from the outside world by tall fences and prison guards paid by the government. He could choose his visitors: his families and cronies can visit anytime, even overnight if they so desire, and the guards can keep out the nosy members of media and militant groups. He would be living in his own world with nary a worry, free from the hassles of the rest of the world. While the government struggles to tame the budget deficit, he wouldn't have to worry about paying for his wants. The government is obliged to pay for them.

This may be, in the words of Erap lawyer Rene Saguisag, "like a fantasy," but make no mistake about it, the noose is closing in on Erap. The Supreme Court's seven-day deadline for both parties to file arguments and counter-arguments is just a reprieve, much like those given to condemned prisoners scheduled for execution. The Bureau of Prison is already looking for a cell in which to detain Erap once the criminal charges against him are filed with the Sandiganbayan and the warrant of arrest is issued. All the jails are congested and the prospect is for the former president of the Philippines to share a cell with 20 or so criminals of the OXO and Sigue-Sigue type. Which is why I fantasized about converting the Boracay mansion into Erap's prison.

This is not without precedent. Colombia's top drug lord, Pablo Escobar, built himself a luxury mansion inside prison. Our own Rep. Romeo Jalosjos refurbished several cells inside the New Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa for himself and his *alalays*, even putting up a tennis court and cabanas on the prison grounds.

Inmates of the Correctional Institute for Women fantasize that Imelda Marcos would build her own house inside their own prison compound when she is finally convicted of the charges against her.

But these women prisons will wait a long time, at the rate the Sandiganbayan is moving. It has been 15 years since the Marcoses were chased out of the country, but Imelda's trial has not even started. At that rate, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's term would be over before Francis Garchitorena even issues a warrant of arrest for Erap.

We have so-called "fastest judges alive" like Manuel Pamaran and Onofre Villaluz but we also have the "slowest judges alive" and they all belong to the Sandiganbayan. They seem to want to be immortalized in the Guinness Book of World Records. Ironically, the Sandigan was created precisely to speed up the trial of graft cases against public officials. They never even dreamed that the justices appointed to the court would be this slow.

You know why there is so much graft in government? Because the grafters know that even if they are caught, it would take decades for the trial to be finished. Complainants and witnesses can die of old age before they get to testify. Even if they survive, they will be so enfeebled with age that they will have forgotten what happened when their turn to testify comes up.

* * *

I received many phone calls in reaction to the Feb. 16 column regarding the impending massacre of those majestic mahogany trees lining both sides of Quezon Avenue to give way to an interchange at the corner of Edsa. Rep. Heherson Alvarez, who may be the next secretary of environment and natural resources, said he called up Public Works Secretary Simeon Datumanong upon reading the column. Datumanong, he said, assigned one of his undersecretaries to do what is necessary to save the trees.

Chito Bertol of the Manila Seedling Bank Foundation said he gave up a seven-meter wide strip of leased MSBF land for the service road so that the mahogany trees on the side of the present Quezon Avenue could be saved. Bertol said those trees with white lines around their trunks would be saved. Those with green markings would be balled and transplanted. Those with red markings are the trees condemned to be cut.

Copies of the DENR tree-cutting/balling permit and the clearance from the Metro Manila Development Authority for the project were faxed to me. It turns out that a total of 423 trees will be cut and balled. At least 186 trees will be massacred, of which 70 are mahogany trees. Two hundred thirty seven trees will be balled and transplanted, 179 of which are mahogany. Transplanted trees have a mortality rate of 10 percent, which means at least 23 more will die. (When the center island of the Elliptical Road was narrowed, the palm trees there were balled but left there and never transplanted. Naturally, they died.) Even the palm trees on the center island of Quezon Avenue will be massacred. Forty coconut palms and 30 anahaw palms will also be cut down.

Dulce de Vera, a music teacher of Miriam College, also called and, like me, wondered why the environmental NGOs are so quiet. She had been frantic for weeks, she said, looking for people to save those trees. She had been heartened by my column, she said. Will President Macapagal raise a finger to save them? I hope so, but don't bet on it.

For the information of the President and other public officials, it takes 100 trees to cleanse the polluted air spewed by just one truck. But one tree can provide enough oxygen for 10 air-conditioners.

Metro Manila, by the way, is ranked fifth among the 10 most polluted cities in the world. A higher incidence of respiratory diseases is in store for Metro Manilans if we don't stop cutting trees. We should plant more trees instead.

Hanging out

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

KENNETH Chua has a very interesting letter:

"He (De Quiros) believes that Gloria should choose non-winnable but worthier senatorial wannabes. Why? Why should we disregard popularity? You have got to ask yourself why are they popular in the first place (and why your 'deserving wannabes' aren't)?

"Allow me to give my five-cents answer. They, the winnable, are popular because they 'hang out' with the people, as in spend time with them, while your wannabes spend so much time in the office thinking of solutions to the people's problem.

"What's wrong with that? Let's put it this way: Which is better, a father who spends time with his children or a father who spends his waking hours working for his children? The point I'm trying to say is that the people don't need you to think of the solution to their problem. They already know the solution, they only want you to spend time with them so you can hear them out. Little things your wannabes find hard to do."

Good point, but a little too black-and-white. To begin with, I never said Gloria should choose the worthy candidates, who were the people who contributed mightily to Edsa II, even though they were non-winnable. I said popularity was a fickle thing, even if you just went by the surveys. Which I do not; I find hanging out in the streets a more reliable gauge. A little over three months ago, Erap was enjoying unprecedented popularity, today he is enduring unprecedented notoriety. A little over three months ago, Joker Arroyo, Jun Magsaysay, Serge Osmeña and Winnie Monsod were just "people at the office thinking of solutions to the people's problems," today they are household names. Public perception does change.

I am not saying we shouldn't spare a thought to a candidate's chances at the polls. Or else let's just campaign for some of the so-called "nuisance candidates," some of whom are probably more deserving. What I am saying is that we may not make that the overriding concern in choosing which candidates to field, or from the point of view below, which candidates to vote for.

There is monumental danger in equating popularity or "winnability" with candidates who know the people or have their interests at heart. Chua's metaphor for the popular candidate who is the father who keeps company with his children rather than merely works for them is valid only to a very limited degree. Only few popular or "winnable" candidates may live up to it. Most of them—and we have been deluged over the past decades with movie stars, basketball players and TV announcers—I myself would liken to the glib-tongued individual, with a reputation for gambling, womanizing and ripping off people, who keeps treating his neighbors to rounds of drinks for the privilege of becoming their collector of dues. I think that is the more accurate metaphor.

Alongside this, there is monumental danger in equating the winnable or popular candidate with those who hang out with the people and the one who is not (yet) so with those who live in ivory towers. The deserving candidates I have in mind are not those who merely drew up stratagems for toppling Erap (they were, true enough, the politically motivated, as Erap's camp adduced) but those who marched in the streets, quite apart from thundering in the halls of the Senate, with the overriding desire to end wrongdoing in government.

You do **not** have to hang out with the people to be popular. Few of the popular candidates, who come from show biz in particular, do. There is PR to do it for you. There is media projection to do it for you. You do not have to go very far to find an example. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is the prime product of it, which is why I said she was bound to sympathize with those who got ahead that way. She "never hanged" out with the people, she merely relied on Dante Ang to turn her through posters—whose sizes, by the way, patently violated Comelec rules—into the "Nora Aunor of Philippine politics." I don't know why Nora Aunor shouldn't sue for infringement of property rights, universal fealty to which Gloria pushed vigorously for in the Senate during the GATT debate.

I do think public officials generally, elective or appointive, candidates or non-candidates, should "hang out with the people." Not with an eye to campaigning later, but with a thought to serving them better. I have repeatedly argued for it. I kept saying during Fidel Ramos' time that I wouldn't mind seeing his bureaucrats, who kept talking about (false) globalization, experience some kind of "remolding." That was what the Chinese government did to their intellectuals, though to an extreme degree. They sent them to the hinterlands to dig earth and make compost. There's nothing like knowing poverty first-hand to want to do something about it. "Immersion," as local activists themselves called it, is not without its epiphanies. That may not be confused with kissing babies and patting dogs, which is the essence of popularity and "winnability."

I remember agreeing with Ched Arzadon (my apologies to her for spelling her name wrong the first time around; I've since increased the size of my e-mail fonts), when she said last year, in response to my column on the "dumb *masa*," that though she disliked Erap, she hoped his appeal to the *masa* would not be lost on future leaders. Illusory as it was, Erap gave the *masa* to feel they were important and mattered in his reckoning. The lesson was not to shy away from giving the *masa* false hopes, it was to give the *masa* real hopes.

She hits the nail on the head again when she writes:

"Yesterday one big party list came to our town to rally for support. I appreciated how they tried to explain their accomplishments for the past two years. But I wished they explained things in a way that the audience would understand and appreciate.

"For those of us who are joining the campaign caravan of our favorite candidate, let us make sure that we communicate to the masses within their own sphere (I don't like using 'level' because it sounds hierarchical) so that they feel that they are important and therefore empowered. If not, they would continue to think that governance is only the concern of the learned and the elite.

"Take time to dialogue. Encourage people to ask questions. It doesn't matter if you use *kanto* words and you sound *bakya*. Erap used that stuff for his own selfish interests. Why can't we do it, not just to win votes for our party or our candidate—but for a nobler reason?"

My sentiments exactly.

Should a civilian or military retiree head DND?

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

BAGUIO City was a traffic nightmare over the weekend, with its streets choked due to three big activities: the 10-year-old annual flower festival, "Panagbenga," which keeps growing and growing; the annual alumni homecoming of the Philippine Military Academy; and the Club John Hay Open, a big golf event. Panagbenga drew flower aficionados from as far as the Visayas, while the PMA homecoming drew at least 2,000 alumni. The CJH golf open also saw quite a big number of players participating. All these events were highlighted by the appearance of President Macapagal. She played golf at CJH last Sunday.

* * *

This was the first time in memory that Baguio was choked with traffic so badly. I failed to get into the city proper as my husband wisely took the peripheral roads. A plant freak, I regretted not being able to get to the Panagbenga. A whole bus carrying PMA Class '61 members and their wives from the PMA last Saturday noon got stuck on Session Road for nearly four hours. It arrived at Baguio Country Club at 4 p.m., with everyone already pale with hunger, for what was scheduled as a class luncheon. Many cars stalled from over-heating. It was a monstrous inconvenience that the city officials should never have allowed to happen. The PMA homecoming and Panagbenga should never again be held on the same weekend.

* * *

With the resignation of Defense Secretary Orly Mercado a few weeks ago, the issue of whether that post ought to be filled by a civilian like Mercado or whether it ought to be returned to a military retiree has been talked about. The debate recently escalated after President Macapagal dropped very broad hints at a press conference in Baguio City that she might appoint retiring AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Angelo Reyes to the top DND post. The perception is that Reyes is being rewarded for his support for Macapagal in those crucial moments at Edsa Dos.

Recall that there was rumor that deposed President Estrada was supposed to name Reyes to the DND post after Mercado would have resigned to run for the Senate. But later Estrada decided to extend Reyes' term for another year, beyond his 56th birthday next month. Ms Macapagal rescinded that extension, but it seems she's ready to "promote" Reyes to the DND.

* * *

There are pros and cons to the designation of a retired military officer as defense secretary. Over the decades, the post has been held by military retirees, with only two exceptions: Mercado and Juan Ponce Enrile. Nandy Pacheco, staunch advocate of the Gunless Society, called up to insist that the DND post ought to be in the hands of a civilian to emphasize civilian supremacy over the military. Former Defense Assistant Secretary Ruben Carranza, who had served with Mercado and later resigned in the wake of "Juetengate," shared Pacheco's view.

If you ask the military officers and retirees, however, they would bat 100 percent for an ex-military guy to head the DND, as they feel that only such a person can fully understand the needs of the defense establishment and its biggest bureaucracy, the AFP.

General Reyes would be a happy compromise since he comes from military ranks but has worked for quite a while in the civilian sector. During the martial law regime, the Harvard-educated Reyes was assistant to then Prime Minister Cesar Virata, writing his speeches and doing research for him.

* * *

Over dinner at Baguio Country Club last Saturday evening, I had a good chat with Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, who confessed that he has a political dilemma. He has always been with the LDP and wants to stay, but the problem is that the LDP senatorial line-up, led by party stalwart Edgardo Angara, includes a good number of candidates identified with the ousted Estrada regime, for whom he cannot campaign. As a result, Biazon, who figured prominently in the impeachment trial and was among the 10 senators who voted for the second envelope's opening, said he will just not campaign for the LDP.

Is he moving to Lakas where he probably would feel more comfortable? Biazon replied that he has been with the LDP since the beginning of his political career and prefers to stay with it. That's principled politics.

The problem of a divided LDP has cropped up, as a "reformist" faction identified with Nueva Vizcaya Rep. Carlos Padilla is inclined to forming a coalition with Lakas. Biazon said he is calling for a meeting of the party soon to resolve this issue.

* * *

I have been quite open in my support for my old college chum Sonny Alvarez for the environment portfolio because I feel that he, among all the contenders, best understands the problems besetting the environment. This is because he has been deeply involved in environmental issues for a long time. His patriotism also went through an acid test during the Marcos and Estrada regimes.

But since this column is a free market of ideas, I'm glad to publish the endorsement of another candidate by my Hawaii-based *tocaya*, Dr. Belinda Aquino of the University of Hawaii. Lindy sent me an e-mail to plug for her former student at UH, Bukidnon Rep. Nereus Acosta. While admitting her bias, Lindy opined that Neric, who co-authored the Clean Air Act, would be excellent for the job. She recalled that when Liberal Party president Butch Abad was in Hawaii one time, he spoke highly of his party mate, and particularly the fact that he was able to get such a major legislation passed despite being a neophyte representative. Neric, who is "the only Ph.D. in the entire Congress," is possibly the best expert on the environment and Mindanao cultural minorities, she said. His doctoral dissertation was on the lumads of Mindanao.

* * *

Lindy Aquino said her vision of a mature political system is one where people like Acosta, "bright, honest, unprepossessing, hardworking, uncorrupt, would decide to cast their lot with politics and clean it up." Of course, she noted, there was some "dynasty" argument when Neric first stood for election after his mother, Rep. Socorro Acosta, finished her third term. Possibly during her time, Coring Acosta was the only Ph.D. in the House, too (from Ohio State). Coring, a Boholana, was a few years ahead of Lindy in Hawaii in the 1960s where they were both East-West Center grantees. It was there that Coring met an Ilocano graduate student named Johnny Acosta and they fell in love and got married, and went to the mainland for Coring's Ph.D. Neric is their second son, born in Bukidnon after their return to the Philippines. Johnny, also a Ph.D., was chief chemist of Del Monte. "As you can see, the Acostas are a very high-powered family intellectually, but simple folk with the work ethic," said Lindy, adding that GMA should "utilize Neric's talents."

Election talk

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

DRIVING through the city last Sunday, a friend and I spotted posters plastered on every available space on walls and concrete posts. The posters said: "Gringo—Ibalik sa Senado (Bring back Gringo to the Senate)." My friend suggested that other teams should go around with red paint and scrawl just one word over these posters: "Bakeeet? (Whyyy?)"

Anybody want to take up the offer?

It's been said before, but I'll say it again. If a candidate cannot obey a very clear and simple law restricting the size of campaign materials and where they can be posted, what are the chances that once elected, this candidate will respect other laws and live up to their oaths of office? And how can we believe their protestations about preserving the environment when they have no compunctions about "uglifying" and dirtying the city with their posters?

* * *

"WWW" or "Win with Winnie" is the battle cry of a group of volunteers supporting the candidacy of "Mareng Winnie" Monsod. "A win with Winnie is a win for the people!" is their slogan. As a neophyte and a non-traditional politician, Mareng Winnie needs everyone's help in providing a machinery of dedicated people to propel her to the Senate—armed only with her expertise and flawless track record and the faith of those who believe the time has come to elect only qualified senators. "We need all of you!" says an electronic "flyer" distributed by the group.

All those who believe in Mareng Winnie and want to help in her campaign are invited to attend a *merienda* on Thursday, Feb. 22 from 4-6 p.m. at the St. Andrew's Parish Center, Reposo cor. Kalayaan St., Bel-Air Village. The candidate herself will be discussing her senatorial platform and programs, as well as helping to map out the campaign itself. *Mga mare, magkita-kita tayo!*

* * *

MORE election talk. Circulated by texting is a "prescription" to fight off PHLEGM (Puno, Honasan, Lacson, Enrile, Gringo—or Gng. Loi—and Miriam). The antidote is "MyRACOF": Monsod y Recto, Arroyo, Chato, Osmeña, Flavier.

Others have coined yet another memory booster, to remember whom NOT to vote for in the May elections. The new acronym: EM PAST HELL, for:

E-Erap Estrada their leader who could do a comeback to replace Loi
M-madrigal
P-puno
A-angara
S-santiago
T-tamano
H-honasan
E-enrile
L-lacson
L-loi

To those looking for a more substantial exercise than coining acronyms, corny, catchy or compelling as they may be, here's an invitation to visit the website www.halalan2001.com, whose slogan is "Simply voting is just not good enough." In other words, the responsible voter seeks as much information as possible, and strives to vote intelligently and support concretely those candidates and platforms that are worth supporting.

Here's a more detailed explanation of what the website exists for: "From merely voting on election day, Halalan2001.com aims to bring Philippine elections to a higher plane. Through its pages, it dreams of inculcating in the Filipino voter the true meaning of suffrage and the importance of having an informed appreciation of the electoral process. In so doing, the Filipino voter will not just look for 'popular' candidates but rather select from among those vying for public offices the crème de la crème to lead them to progress and prosperity every three years."

I took a quick peek at the website and found it offers information on the various political parties and candidates, their stand on issues, and issues surrounding voter education. My only complaint is that it takes so long to access and download its features, though that may be the fault of my ISP.

* * *

REACTIONS to the column on "Miriam's big mouth" have come flooding in, in person or through e-mail. Here a sampling of those that came through cyberspace: "I could hardly contain myself while reading your column about Miriam Santiago," writes Ida Carmelina Cardenas-Mendoza. "She has foot- and-mouth disease (always putting her foot in her mouth when talking), attitude so ugly I can't believe the Filipino people voted her as senator, (I can believe it now; they voted for Erap). Seeing her during the impeachment proceedings railing like an uncontrolled hyena—wow!!! It is a shame for all of us not to be checking a candidate's character and (stands on) issues when we choose and vote for people who would lead our country…hopefully we will learn a lot from all that had happened."

An unsigned missive starts with: "I am right now cursing that Marka Piña Soy Sauce." (*Toyo?—RJD*)

"UP people should disown her, what a pity. UP *ang tatay (ko). Kawawa naman siya, binaboy ni* Miriam *ang mga tiga-UP*. Now I have decided not to push my plan of going to UP for my master's if just to please my late father."

Comment: Considering what she's already said about the usual career path of UP law graduates, who're supposed to be motivated only by high salaries, I think the UP Alumni Association should indeed consider expelling this particular alumna.

Our unidentified correspondent ends with this pithy "curse": "Hope they throw rotten *kamatis* at her in the campaign."

Jane Mungcal of Sucat, Parañaque has a practical query. "May we know the PASSING GRADE of this self-proclaimed genius when she took the bar exams? Please publish her score so that the entire nation will know because *ang alam po namin nangamote siya sa exam nila*."

Comment: Miriam's less-than-impressive grades when she took the bar exam has become something of an urban legend. Does anybody know the real score?

And all the way from Toronto, Canada, "Jimmy" has this daring prediction: "Miriam will still win. You wanna bet? If I win you will give me one case of San Miguel beer (24 bottles), otherwise I'll give you 10 cases of Coke."

Comment: I also drink beer, Jimmy, but sparingly. The bet's on, but make it Diet Coke, ok?

To be fair

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

NEWSPAPER people are often accused of being biased, unfair, opinionated and a lot more adjectives that are even less complimentary. Not wishing to appear unduly prejudiced against the previous administration (a fairness I cannot attribute to them with regard to heritage), I am reprinting the answer from the office of former Secretary Robert Aventajado's to "Garbage, garbage everywhere" (PDI, 2/10/01) that implies the article was "inaccurate, erroneous and misleading."

"ISSUE #1: The previous administration, specifically the Greater Metropolitan Manila Solid Waste Management Committee, did not have a comprehensive plan to address the garbage problems of Metro Manila.

"FACT: The GMMSWMC, then chaired by Secretary Robert Aventajado, was the body charged with formulating a comprehensive solid waste management plan for Metro Manila. As early as the last quarter of 1999, the agency had prepared an integrated plan for implementation by the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority. The role of the GMMSWC is limited drafting to the solid waste plan and the terms of reference for the bidding on the proposed sanitary landfill. The MMDA implements the plan and conducts the bidding, while the Metro Manila mayors are responsible for the collection of garbage in their respective area.

"With the assistance of foreign and local experts on solid waste and valuable inputs from NGOs, the committee presented a three-pronged approach to the problem:

1. Promotion of waste segregation, recycling and composting as a way to lessen volume of waste to be disposed of and to protect the environment.
2. Use of alternative or state-of-the-art technologies such as pyrolysis, plasma and gasification.
3. Establishment of sanitary landfill(s) to serve as final disposal system for all waste residues that cannot be recycled, converted into fertilizer or processed by the alternative technologies.

"The twin objectives of the three-pronged approach were to: (1) protect the public health, and (2) preserve the environment. The key requirements of the integrated waste management are: collection of all the waste generated, comprehensive public education program, reduction in quantity and toxicity of waste, and technically feasible, cost-effective and socially acceptable treatment and disposal.

"There are only two proven technologies in the world that can handle large volumes, such as Metro Manila's 6000 tons of daily garbage output, namely, sanitary landfills and incinerators. The latter is banned under the Clean Air Act, leaving sanitary landfill as the most environmentally sound and proven method of final disposal. The GMMSWMV had proposed one sanitary landfill to handle a minimum of 2,000 tons of garbage. The recycling and composting drive and the alternative technologies would handle the remaining 4,000 tons. But if, for any reason, these two fail to take in the 4,000 tons, there would always be the sanitary landfill to depend on.

"Secretary Aventajado was one of the few ranking government officials to fully embrace and push for waste segregation, recycling and composting. He actively collaborated with various environmental NGOs, such as Mother Earth, Linis Ganda, Earth Society and Artists for the Environment, to promote segregation, recycling and composting. He encouraged manufacturers of plastics, paper, aluminum and bottle to buy more from small vendors and to pay them on time. He is the current chair of Zero Basura Philippines, a coalition of NGOs advocating waste segregation, recycling and composting."

(The previous paragraph sounds like it came from a PR group but don't let that stop you from reading. All things being equal, why didn't any of the NGOs rise to his defense when his reputation was being battered?)

ISSUE #2: Secretary Aventajado and former Chair Jojo Binay of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority did nothing to address the looming garbage crisis.

"FACT: The GMMSWMC had finished drafting the terms of reference for the bidding on the proposed sanitary landfill for 25 years on a build-own-operate (BOO) basis. Nine firms responded to the invitation. On March 9, 2000, JANCOM, the foreign consortium claiming to have a valid contract with the Ramos administration for an incinerator project, filed a case against MMDA and GMMSWMC to stop the bidding process; it was able to secure a TRO from the RTC of Pasig, thus stopping the bidding process. The TRO was subsequently lifted by the Court of Appeals (CA), and the MMDA proceeded with he opening of bids on June 6, 2000. However, on Aug. 15, 2000, the RTC Pasig again ordered the MMDA to stop the bidding process.

"On Sept. 1, 2000, the CA enjoined the RTC from enforcing the TRO thus allowing the MMDA to continue with the bidding process. On Sept. 20, 2000, the MMD Pre-qualification Bids and Awards Committee (PBAC) found that of the five pre-qualified proponents only two qualified for the final selection stage—Pro-Environment Consortium, which submitted the lowest tipping fee of $18.89 per metric ton, and Dizon-CGEA, which submitted a bid of $32 per ton. But before the PBAC could recommend to the MMDA chair and Metro Manila Council, the Court of Appeals issued on Nov. 13, 2000, an order upholding the JANCOM contract, thus stopping the bidding process for the landfill project. The government's request for reconsideration is pending before the CA.

"For comparison purposes, the proposed tipping fee of JANCOM would reach $91 per metric ton, including the subsidy for the energy component, while the present cost of MMDA for San Mateo is $16.60 per ton. As mentioned earlier, the lowest tipping fee in the bidding for a permanent 25-year sanitary landfill was $18.89, submitted by Pro-Environment Consortium.

"Clearly, the all-out effort to find a lasting solution to the garbage problem was blocked by legal obstacles…by various groups. Moreover, the not-in-my-backyard syndrome has stymied the search for a landfill site. With the impending May 2001 elections, no politician would want to host landfill facility in his backyard. ***(To be continued)***

Oh men!

YOUNGBLOOD

Pearlsha Abubakar

*We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.***

I LOVE men! I suspect the reason I didn't learn much in high school was that it was an exclusive girls' school run by nuns. Well, men, like smoking and drinking, are bound to kill me in the long haul, but I love them anyway. At least while they're interesting—and interested in me.

There was always a man at every important point in my life, as if manning the checkpoint of my innocence. My father, a devout Muslim, taught me very early in life to be modest, chaste, proper, and to save my virtues for marriage. When I started menstruating, it was my elder brothers who kept bugging me to buy myself a deodorant, though I preferred *tawas*. Ever so *makulit*, my brothers were always there to look the men up and down and give their thumbs up or down, even though the poor fellows had yet to declare their intentions. To them, first impressions last, and if you happen to have large feet, or ears, or nose, or perhaps a humongous ego, you're dead meat. But they are polite enough to wait until you leave before they start laughing at your expense.

During my first year in college, I saw a man's sex for the first time. No, not my brothers'. I had already seen a picture of it in a magazine, way back in grade six, but this was the real thing. The man was in a car parked in a curb and he was lying on the seat, touching himself. I was on my way to school, but the sight of that man pleasing himself would eventually lead me to many detours and excursions in my life, not to mention questions.

In first year, I decided to be a linguist, majoring in Nippongo. My first male friend in college, Raf, was learning Spanish and German at the same time. He unwittingly introduced me to the sight of chest hair peeking out his polo shirt.

Raf told me about ee cummings, the Anne of Avonlea chronicles, Dead Stars, Black Rain, while we gleefully got lost in the labyrinthine roads of Teacher's Village. Raf always had a first-aid kit with him. When I got blisters from too much walking, he stuck a Band-Aid. That was my first quasi-erotic experience: his head bent over my foot and his heavy breathing caressing the heel.

Raf was also the first guy to give me a poem, although it was intended for someone else. Then he got himself a German girlfriend and forgot me.

On my way to becoming a linguist, I decided to learn a little bit of geography. I took up a basic geography course, and world map whiz Chris was one of the senior students. He loved my utter lack of interest in him.

So what does an attention-deprived guy do? He showered me with flowers, chocolates and birthday greetings made from newspapers stringed together across the Sunken Garden. I didn't know I was looking for attention until I found Chris. He was 24 and had a job. My mother didn't like him—until he fixed a leaking pipe in our house—and with his own tools yet!

It's quite true that certain women are won over by unnatural persistence. So Chris got a first taste of my lips, my neck and everything short of the real deal. He treasured my virginity probably more than I did. He was always the one who pulled away, saying, "Let's get married first." He was every mom's dream son-in-law, and he was willing to convert to Islam, so my father liked him too.

But though we already made plans for our wedding and dream house, I was barely 18. My body and soul yearned for flight, thinking that love was a hummingbird that I must chase after. I didn't know then that true love waits. Besides, I didn't have the patience to stay perfectly still in the comfort of compatibility. Chris and I were getting along so well that I passed my geography course with little effort at all. We were too good to be true.

On our second year of going steady, I revived my adolescent interest in sketching. Then I met Raoul, the artist. Unlike Chris, who was as pale as mayonnaise, Raoul was as coffee as mocha java. Raoul was 29, didn't have a job, and counted his Staedtler pencils as his only luxuries. For one reason or another, the girls he drew on canvas always bore a striking resemblance to me. So I loved him for a while until the girls on his canvas started resembling somebody else.

When I turned 20, I decided to become a musician. I joined a band and promptly fell in love with the guitarist. Everything you need to know about a man's character is, quite literally, in his fingers. And Ramil, with his long, dexterous and *kalyo*-tipped digits, could strum me like a guitar and bring out the best in my voice. He was a self-made man with a failed marriage. He taught me that the wisdom of life is in Cubao: Everything you will ever need is in Cubao. There is no last trip in Cubao. Buses from different points of the archipelago unite and move forward and backward in Cubao. You will never get lost in Cubao.

Ramil and I ate at *carinderias* and planned on becoming farmers in Ilocos. He taught me many things, in bed and out, and loved me very well.

But I was young and impulsive. I had just won a scholarship abroad, and I wanted more, more, more. And so along the way, I had an Indonesian boyfriend who was a *kutubuku* in robotics. Still, my heart breaks whenever I think of how lonely he was when I left.

Last year, after getting passing grades from literary heavyweights like Dalisay and Lacaba, I decided to become a serious writer. (I guess at this point, I've failed miserably.) Anyway, fate brought to my attention a promising poet-cum-beefcake whom I will rename Korn. He was absolutely drop-dead corny! He adored Jim Carrey and Adam Sandler and impersonated them whenever he could. He was the light of my life. But like all of life's ironies, it was with this comic that I experienced the dark side.

Korn always questioned convention, because that's what poets and writers do. He questioned my dependence on my mother. He questioned my penchant for idealizing him (I was always calling him my Greek god and kept consulting astrological charts for our compatibility ratings). He also introduced me to Rainer Maria Rilke's concept of solitude: since people are fundamentally alone, they should embrace solitude rather than reject it by cluttering their lives with hollow preoccupations. With him, I became stronger and more independent. And because I became stronger, I also got heavier, in a metaphorical sense. Our phone conversations, which had been nothing but cloying, poetry-strewn strings of endearment in the beginning, became a battle of wits and sniffles (on my end; he always won). Soon, I became desperate, wanting him to think more about us and our future than about his art. I wanted marriage, babies and stability. As if to spite me, he started taking Rilke very seriously, preferring solitude over my companionship. Eventually, he shut me out of his life with books, trips and other friends, some of whom were very beautiful.

I was devastated. I retreated to my room and wrote him hate mail and hate poetry and hate songs, which remain unsent up to now. I had never felt such hate before, until I came across a line in a self-help book that said: "Hate is simply love fumed cold." My love for Korn had become a mission to change him; and so I decided to let go. The breakup cost me 10 pounds, my job and (almost) my desire for men.

After all these addictions, I realized I had lost a good deal of self-esteem, innocence, virginity, happiness, and hope for a secure and stable relationship. A few of the men wouldn't let go, so things had turned nasty. They called me a slut. But since some of them let go of me too easily, things also soured. I wished them acne, major acne.

Yet, I also gained a great deal of wisdom and joy from these relationships, although sometimes I feel like a vampire, sucking them dry in my various attempts to infuse more depth into my personality. But these men are just like me, pilgrims searching for deeper meanings in life, caught up in a bizarre, cosmic trial-and-error game that they don't really hope to win. That they had found time, no matter how brief, to share their lives with me (and other women) speaks of boundless hope in our common humanity. In the end, men are not from Mars, and women are not from Venus if they inhabit the same space, experience the same pain, and learn the same insights. Men are women and women are men. We are one.

Well, I'm not about to give up now. I've realized that there are not too many fish out there in the sea, just as there are not too many Madonnas and Tori Amoses around (two of my favorite pop goddesses). To paraphrase D.H. Lawrence, the fish in the sea are usually just mackerel or herring. So I guess I'll be a solitary mermaid for a while. Until the next *siokoy* comes along.

Pearlsha Abubakar, 24, wrote this piece before she found her siokoy last year and got married in April.

New DOH secretary must institutionalize reforms

IT'S been almost a month since Edsa Dos and still the Department of Health is waiting for a new secretary. We urgently need a secretary to pursue vital reform efforts in the health sector. If health is truly one of the priorities of this administration, the next secretary will have his or her hands full with important things to do in order to institutionalize the critical reforms recently initiated.

Figuring prominently the past few months was the bold move to import cheaper drugs from India. Despite pressures from the multinational industry, the DOH stood its ground together with the Department of Trade and Industry. This is one program we hope Trade Secretary Mar Roxas will continue to pursue.

It is also important to control the cost of health care and to make social health insurance sustainable. We believe these are very important in a country where the poor are the majority because there is simply not enough money to go around for government subsidized health care.

The DOH has reorganized itself to be more responsive to the challenges of devolution by creating a leaner central office and strengthening the hospitals and regional offices. We have always complained about how bloated and inefficient our bureaucracies are and here we have one department that has taken the first steps toward more efficient governance.

At this critical point in the health sector reform process, we need a leader with vision, integrity, competence and the will to pursue much needed reforms. The professional corps in the DOH is waiting for such a person to be appointed.—**WITH 17 SIGNATORIES, employees, Department of Health, San Lazaro Compound, Rizal Avenue, Sta. Cruz, Manila**

Victim of vilification campaign

IT always happens! This time it appears that poor Sonny Alvarez may be the victim. An innocent victim of labeling and name-calling, by those who ought to have been identified as the real villains themselves.

Some 15 years ago, charlatans were able to hide under the label of "anti-Marcos" or even better yet, "pro-Cory" activists. Especially the Johnny-come-latelies and *balimbing* varieties! Now "anti-Erap," "Edsa Dos" or "civil society" labels provide a convenient camouflage for opportunistic villainy. For as it was 15 years ago, all you need today to misappropriate these labels for yourself is to have been seen on TV at Edsa a few times, or a close friend or protégé of the instant celebrities, or an officer of a recently revived civil society organization, whose actual membership may be as sparse as the pork in a can of pork and beans.

Of such fluffy weightlessness is the recent vilification campaign against Rep. Heherson "Sonny" Alvarez and his wife Cecile's 30-year record of being early pioneers on the correct but often oppressed and underdog side of political and civil society's struggles.

I believe that my brother Fr. Antonio E. Olaguer, S.J. and I are two of the very few living and intimate witnesses of this long odyssey of Sonny and Cecile Alvarez in the good fight not just against the corrupt Marcos dictatorship but for good government thereafter.

And so unlike these recent Edsa Dos instant claimants for Ms Macapagal's gratitude for their few months or perhaps even shorter days of vocal anti-Erap activities, Sonny Alvarez's historically provable and unique contribution to the unseating of Erap Estrada was much earlier and meatier. With Tito Guingona and other persevering street marchers numbering less than 5,000, I remember seeing Alvarez many times out there on the street with very little publicity and at the height of Erap's popularity as early as 1998. And when a small group of us unknown private citizens, still unaware of Chavit Singson's future providential appearance on the scene, were preparing the impeachment charges against Estrada, it was only Alvarez among all the 220 or so congressmen who conferred with us day and night on the nitty-gritty of presenting and winning the peoples' approval of the charges against Erap. Thus, when I sought the usual early bird and unselfish assistance of our former Light-a-Fire associate Al Yuchengco, it was only to Sonny that Al gave his explicit nod of full trust and confidence.

Despite their poor media relationship, I dare say that it is the nation's and not just Ms Macapagal's gratitude for 30 long years of sacrifice and service, that is due in justice not only to Sonny, but to his wife Cecile as well!

Lastly, I question the basic logic of Nene Pimentel's recent broadside against Alvarez's supposed "disqualification" as putative DENR secretary, just because he was not in favor of Pimentel's version of a total log ban. Following Nene's logic, all Cabinet nominees even if qualified to be Cabinet members, should also have agreed on their previous judgment calls with Pimentel's own policy versions vis-à-vis major programs of any of the departments with secretaries still to be appointed! But Pimentel is not yet the president of the Philippines or the chief policy spokesperson of President Macapagal!—**EDUARDO B. OLAGUER, c/o www.ImpeachErapNow.com, Aurora Milestone Building, 1045 Aurora Blvd., Quezon City**

Fishwives' gossip in Agustin column

WE wish to belie what Victor Agustin peddled in his column last Feb. 11.

To begin with, Balgos & Perez is not Justice Secretary Hernando Perez's law firm. He ceased to have anything to do with Balgos & Perez when he joined the present administration. Agustin should credit us with a little bit more circumspection and knowledge of the ethics of our profession.

In the second place, no "Balgos & Perez associate… works full time for the Dichaves board." Lawyers who have left our firm for other ventures are not under our supervision or control. We are, however, proud that most of them have since become judges, prosecutors or executives in either public or private concerns, the political and other affinities of which we do not even know. Neither are these affinities material to us.

In the third place, as far as we are concerned, we do not do any lawyering for anybody identified as Erap cronies. Truth to tell, we have turned down discreet inquiries from representatives of these known cronies as to whether or not we could lawyer for them.

What is that again about idle fishwives' gossip in the market?—**MARCIAL O.T. BALGOS, 1009 West Tower, PSEC Building, Exchange Road, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.**

LETTERS

Help sought for quadruple bypass patient

MY wife Teodora Dela Cruz Ponce, 59, underwent a quadruple bypass operation at St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City. I know it is costly to be confined in that hospital but I have no choice. I want my wife to live.

At this writing her hospital bill is more than P600,000. I did all I could, filing for loans with government and private lending institutions, asking for financial assistance from my co-teachers, employees, relatives, friends and neighbors but still I am short of money.

I sought financial assistance from the office of Bulacan Gov. Josie M. Dela Cruz. The governor through the provincial office of the Department of Social Welfare and Development gave me a check for P20,000.

I am grateful to the provincial executive for helping me and my family. I am now also appealing to those who have a generous heart to help us.—**GREGORIO R. PONCE, 162 E. Viudez St., San Ildefonso, Bulacan**

Terminate RP-Taiwan air pact, again?

I WAS surprised to hear the news that officers of the Philippine Airlines Employees Association, a union of PAL employees, are demanding that President Macapagal terminate the air agreement between Taiwan and the Philippines. What kind of mentality is this? Doesn't an ordinary traveler have the right to choose? And why does PAL insist that it is our national flag carrier when everyone knows it is owned by a staunch supporter of deposed President Joseph Estrada?

PAL's fare is too expensive. During the Aquino and Ramos administrations, we had a choice of airlines to take when we went to the United States. Rescinding the air agreement would jeopardize overseas contract workers in Taiwan. It was only during Estrada's term when our freedom to choose was lost.—**ALFREDO YAO, 26 Washington St. Better Living Subdivision Parañaque City**

Cheaper e-pass rates can ease traffic

THE IDEA that installing e-pass exits in our so-called expressways will help decongest traffic is wrong. If it has accomplished anything, it is only to worsen traffic conditions in practically all exit points of the expressways.

The reason is simple: only a few motorists are willing to spend P1,600 for a "tag kit" that will authorize them to use the exclusive e-pass exits. The result: traffic congestion in all the remaining regular exit points where the less-moneyed motorists queue up for long minutes in kilometric lines of exiting vehicles. Meanwhile, the e-pass exit that could otherwise be used as part of the regular exit point and help ease traffic congestion is clear of traffic most of the time as it is utilized by, perhaps, no more than one-half of one percent of all expressway users. Motorists without the e-pass exit tag who mistakenly take the dedicated lane are arrogantly scolded and shooed away by the Philippine National Construction Co. guards.

My KISS (Keep it simple, stupid!) solution to this is to equip all the exit points of the expressway with the present mechanism installed at the e-pass exit but reduce the exorbitant enrollment fee of more than P1,000 to a more reasonable amount of say, P200 to P300. I guarantee that the perennial, nightmarish, daily traffic congestion at all exit points in the expressway will disappear overnight.—**CARLITO S. VILLANUEVA, lawyer, 162 Posadas Ave., Sucat, Parañaque City**

Arayyy

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

A friend tells me "Arayyy" was the first song her youngest child learned, even before "Baa baa black sheep." She said this with a mixture of pride and amusement and a bit of alarm. After all, the kid's only two years old, and for those of you who haven't heard, "Arayyy" is the first of a current wave of Tagalog "bold songs" that have been ringing up cash registers for several months now.

Here's the refrain from "Arayyy," sung by Mae Rivera: "*Arayyy, kay sakit naman ng ginawa mo/ Arayyy, o kay hapdi nitong puso ko./Kay haba ng mga panahon/Na ikaw lang ang minahal ko/ Ngunit anong dahilan/Ikaw ay biglang nagbago...oh.* (*Arayy*...what you did hurts. *Arayy*...oh my heart hurts. You loved me for so long. What was the reason for your sudden change...oh.)"

At first glance, the lyrics look innocent enough, maybe even corny, fitting into the mold of melodramatic heartbreak songs so popular throughout Asia. To understand why it's called a bold song, you need to listen to the tape, or watch Rivera as she croons away, stretching out strategic syllables or words, for example, *kay hapdi nitong puuuuu...so ko*, suggesting that what's hurting, no, *hapdi* is really more of smarting, isn't the heart.

She lingers as well a wee bit longer with the phrase "*kay haba ng...*" making you wonder too about the long and short of "it" but "it" turns out to be *panahon* (time). But then you can't blame people for going phallistic, the song punctuated with so many different kinds of "*aray*" and accompanied by appropriate (or, for prudes, inappropriate) body language.

"Arayyy" is only one of several bold songs that have quietly crawled up the charts of top *masa* hits. Here's a sample of other titles: "*Idiin mo pa*" (Press harder), "*Kahit gaanong kalaki*" (No matter how big—or is that long?), "Lollipop" (need I translate?) and "*Nilunok ko ang lahat*" (I swallowed everything).

I can see the moralists' dirty minds shifting into full gear. No, it's not what you think. Most of these pieces are actually love songs or more accurately, parodies of love songs. The songs mock the brooding and yearning and sweet little nothings you find in older love songs. And they do this by taking off, with enticing titles and lyrics, from naughtier and more sexually explicit Cebuano songs popularized by Yoyoy Villame and Max Surban.

Villame and Surban's recordings have been around for many years now, and are sung everywhere, in bars and at parties. The two singers beat the Tagalogs at tapping into an even older folk tradition of sexual punning, which is found throughout the Philippines. Perhaps as a way of getting around self-appointed moral guardians, Filipinos have developed punning into an art form, with talents unfurled at their best during parties and drinking sessions.

One example of this tradition is the sexualized *loa* in a small town in Southern Tagalog. The *loa* is actually a form of religious song which has been borrowed and converted into sexual verses recited as entertainment during wedding parties. Only an older woman can initiate the first round of sexual riddles—some of which date back to the early part of the last century—after which anyone can come in with a refrain. The exchange goes on and on with metered verses. Here are just two examples, collected three years ago by Dona Maria Yapchiongco, one of my students at UP. Note that there are 12 syllables to each line:

"*Tinitingnan mo mang libagin ang saya/Ang sinasayahan, amoy asusena.*" (You watch for what comes out of the skirt; what the skirt covers, smells like *asusena*.)

A man can respond with a verse like this: "*Ako ay may manok-balahibo'y itim, kung bumangon ito'y sa gabing madilim.*" (I've got a cock—its feathers are black. When it rises it's in the dark night.)

Now you can see why so much of the "revolutionary humor" we had during People Power II was so ribald. Popular culture is highly sexualized, the joking and punning often accomplished with amazing flair and wit.

All that reflects our generally open and healthy attitudes toward sex. Let me emphasize that I said "generally healthy." There are still many problems of gender inequality, some of which are reinforced by the "bold" songs, especially when they're sung by men. Yet if you listen hard (no pun intended) to the sexual *loa*, or to the latest crop of bold songs, you'll find hints of how Filipinas can control sexuality—their own as well as that of men.

I think the bold songs can even become educational tools, helping us to understand our sexuality. I'll explain all that on Thursday. You might want to get some of the tapes of Mae Rivera and Mystica to preview. (Suggestion to parents: check first with your teenagers since they probably already have them.)

Comments can be sent to aray@pinoykasi.org

Lacson is caught in a dilemma

SHORTLY after Panfilo Lacson was installed as PNP chief, he dramatically declared before local and foreign media that he "will die for Joseph Estrada." I assumed from his statement that he would lay down his life in defense of Estrada. But since Jan. 19, 2001, I have been waiting for a report showing that he has been true to his word. There being none, I will settle for an announcement from Lacson saying that reports about his death are grossly exaggerated.

Several months ago, Lacson declared publicly that he "hated politicians and politics." However, on Feb. 8, he announced that he was running for senator, and the next day, he filed his certificate of candidacy for the May elections.

This behavioral pattern suggests a mental condition which will be better described by a psychiatrist. By running for senator soon after Edsa II, Lacson will be put in a quandary as to whether to defend or repudiate his idol in public. This I have got to see. Either way he does it, it will be a no-win situation for him.

Lastly, Lacson boasts of a 93-percent rating for name recall but I would venture a guess that a major part of that recall was for notoriety as a result of human rights violations and the widely held suspicion of his involvement in atrocities even against harmless citizens.—**MANUEL S. TAYAG, Makati City**

A fool, a hypocrite or a liar?

JERRY Barican's attack against Conrado de Quiros in which he called his fellow INQUIRER columnist "irascible and malicious" and implied an irrational bias against Erap is contemptible. Anyone who worked closely with Jimmy Policarpio and who admitted receiving *jueteng* money under the table has no right to attack any journalist, least of all someone like De Quiros.

True, De Quiros may be at times guilty of overwriting and overreacting but he has never been overwhelmed by money or power the way Barican has.

Barican says he was simply doing a "professional job." A true professional always works within an ethical framework. If Barican was such a professional why did he not object to the INQUIRER boycott, or even leave Malacañang to protest an immoral attempt to stifle freedom of the press?

There are only three ways of looking at how Barican reacted to the boycott. One, he did not know about it, which would make him stupid. Two, he knew about it but kept quiet, which would make him at best an opportunist and a hypocrite. Three, he was directly involved in the boycott which would, by his denial, make him a liar.

I have a suggestion: Barican got into the INQUIRER only when De Quiros stopped writing every day. Now that De Quiros seems to be writing regularly, why not throw Barican out and give De Quiros back his old space.

Barican claims his column gives the INQUIRER, "balance." But you do not balance truth with lies.—**FELIX A. RONDON, personal.mail.yahoo.com**

Q A

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The WORLD

MARGOT J. BATERINA, Editor

Iraq fires missiles at US, British planes

NICOSIA—Iraq fired missiles at US and British warplanes and taunted US President George W. Bush Sunday, amid continuing international condemnation of Friday's air raids and heightened tension in a region wracked by nearly five months of Israeli-Palestinian violence.

Iraq fired missiles at US and British planes patrolling the no-fly zone in southern Iraq two days after the US and Britain bombed military sites around Baghdad in the first raid on Iraq's capital in two years. No planes were hit.

On Iraqi youth television, Baghdad's anti-air defense commander, Gen. Shahin Yassin Mohammad, vowed the country would "retaliate against US and British planes" after Friday's raid which, Iraq claims, left three civilians dead and thirty injured.

Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz also lashed out against the US' rationale for the raid that US and British pilots in Iraq's southern no-fly zone were threatened by Baghdad's anti-aircraft defense systems.

"The American explanations have a laughable pretext," Aziz told reporters.

Thousands of Iraqis took to the streets of Baghdad for a second day, shouting their anger over the raids near the capital.

"Yes to Jihad," or holy war, "No to submission," chanted some 3,000 people in southern Baghdad's Al-Baya district.

They pledged "total support" to President Saddam Hussein's determination to "liberate Palestine."

The demonstrators, some of them officials in the ruling Baath party, burnt US and Israeli flags.

Similar protests orchestrated by the regime took place on Saturday across Iraq and officials said they would continue on Monday.

"This criminal will fare no better against Iraq than his father," George Bush, who as US president waged the 1991 Gulf War that expelled Iraqi occupation forces from Kuwait, said the Babel newspaper run by Saddam's elder son Uday.

"The new dwarf in the 'Black House' will not be capable of doing any better than his father, who suffered a stinging defeat," it said, referring to the survival of Saddam's rule.

In response to the raid, Saddam announced Saturday he had ordered the creation of 21 military divisions for his "Jerusalem Liberation Army."

But Israeli caretaker Prime Minister Ehud Barak assured the Israeli public Sunday night there was no need to worry about a threat from Iraq after meeting with his top military officers.

Iraq launched 39 Scud missiles at Israel during the Gulf War and Saddam recently threatened to bombard it daily for six months to support the Palestinian uprising.

However, Israeli and US forces will start joint exercises Monday, including the launching of Patriot anti-missile missiles, the Israeli Army said Sunday, adding the exercise had been planned for a year.

The US deployed their Patriots in Israel several times in the past, including during the 1991 Gulf war, and also in 1998, when Iraq refused to cooperate with the UN disarmament verifying team.

AFP

Mori's popularity sinks to record low

TOKYO—In what could be a mortal blow to an already wobbly administration, support for Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori has hit its lowest level yet, making him the second-most unpopular Japanese leader since World War II.

Support for Mori has plunged to 9 percent, a 10-percent drop from last month, according to a poll published yesterday by The Asahi newspaper.

The only postwar prime minister to have a lower rating was Noboru Takeshita in 1989. Takeshita later resigned over an influence-peddling scandal.

Mori took office in April last year after the sudden death of Keizo Obuchi, and his public support ratings have slid steadily since, largely because of repeated gaffes and jingoistic remarks evoking memories of Japan's militaristic past.

He is now under fire for finishing a round of golf even after being told about the sinking of a Japanese fishing boat hit by a US Navy submarine off Hawaii on Feb. 9. Nine Japanese, including four high school students, were still missing more than a week after the accident.

Mori, under intense grilling in Parliament on Monday, defended his response to the accident—though acknowledging that he may have failed to gain the "understanding of the nation"—and said he has no intention of resigning.

"My main concern is seeing that the budget is passed," he said.

One senior party official came to his defense.

"Looking at the newspaper, you might have erroneously felt that the Mori Cabinet would be toppled immediately," said party policy chief Shizuka Kamei. "Well, you needn't worry about that."

AP

Repairs delay survey of sunken fishing ship

HONOLULU—The Navy's efforts to scan the wreckage of a Japanese ship sunk by a US submarine were set back Sunday when a deep-sea robot was removed from the sea for repairs.

The Navy is using the robot to evaluate the feasibility of raising the 57-meter Ehime Maru, which sank minutes after the USS Greeneville surfaced underneath it Feb. 9.

On Sunday, crew members using the robot noticed a tear in the tether used to raise and lower it. Navy officials said a sonar machine is still on the ocean floor scanning the wreckage, and the video-equipped robot could be ready to use Monday.

Families of nine men and teenage boys missing since the sinking are pressing the Navy to recover any bodies that may be entombed in the Ehime Maru, even if that means conducting what experts say would be a monumental and unprecedented salvage of the entire ship.

Videotape taken by the robot since Friday showed the exterior of the ship seemingly in pristine condition, but the Coast Guard said the full extent of damage had not been determined.

The Navy said the deep-sea robots might be too big to enter the wreckage to retrieve any bodies from it.

The commercial fishing training vessel was headed toward fishing grounds 480 km southeast of Oahu when the USS Greeneville collided with it during an emergency rapid-ascent drill.

Twenty-six people were rescued, but there have been no signs of the nine missing during a continuing Coast Guard search.

AP

WORLDBRIEFS

Australia gov't in panic after poll losses

CANBERRA—Government leaders warned yesterday that disunity means political death as panic spread through its ranks with conservative voters flocking to a right-wing party. Prime Minister John Howard's conservative coalition of the Liberal and National parties tried to rally, spooked lawmakers, insisting that deals with the right wing, anti-Asian One Nation party were unacceptable. But some lawmakers were considering breaking ranks to avoid being targeted by One Nation.

AP

Clinton's defense of Rich pardon hit

WASHINGTON—Key Republicans and congressional investigators on Sunday slammed former president Bill Clinton's editorial defending his pardon of fugitive financier Marc Rich and vowed to pursue investigations. Republican Senator Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania charged that the editorial Clinton penned for the New York Times' Sunday edition did nothing to clarify his decision or his motives. "There are a great many questions left unanswered in what the president has written," Specter told NBC television. "The op-ed piece raise more questions than it answers, including the process that he used in which he talked just to one side, got their view and totally ignored the view of even his own Justice Department," agreed New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, the former US attorney who brought the initial indictment against the billionaire, speaking on Fox television.

AFP

2 more suspects in Cole bombing nabbed

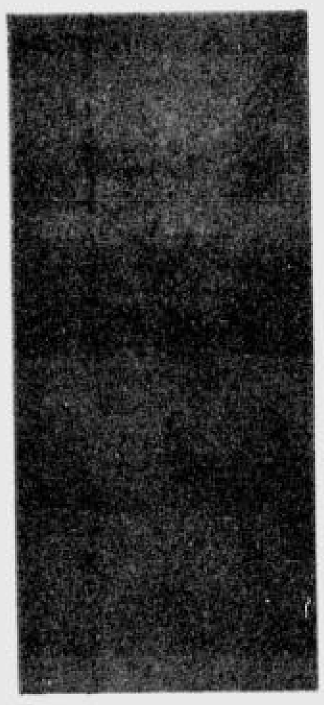
SANAA—Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh announced Sunday that two more suspects had been arrested in connection with the deadly USS Cole blast and that the mastermind behind the bombing was on the run in Afghanistan. Saleh said the two new Yemeni suspects, Mohammad Mohammad al-Ahdal and Mohammad Ahmed Jaafar al-Tayar, belonged to the group of "Afghan" Arabs who fought with Afghanistan against Soviet troops in the 1980s. The Yemeni president also said the mastermind behind the USS Cole blast, Abdul Rahman al-Saafani, had fled Yemen almost a month before the operation. "He is currently in Afghanistan," he said in an interview with the MBC network.

AFP

Inmates at 19 Sao Paulo jails revolt

SAO PAULO—Inmates at 19 jails in the Brazilian state of Sao Paulo staged a massive riot Sunday, leaving at least five people dead and possibly taking as many as 7,000 people hostage. Three people died during the day's most dramatic event as some 8,000 prisoners at Brazil's biggest prison complex took at least 250 people hostage, security officials said. Two other fatalities were reported at a prison at Belem in the east of the state as rioting inmates executed two of their own, according to military police Comdr. Rui Cesar Mello. Riot police had been sent into the giant complex at Carandiru in the city of Sao Paulo, where a total 10,000 prisoners are held.

AFP



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APEC

ASSOCIATION OF PHILIPPINE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

The Association for the Protection of Electricity Consumers

A PETITION FROM OVER 5 MILLION RURAL ELECTRIC CONSUMERS NATIONWIDE

FOR several months now, electric cooperatives serving rural electric consumers have been experiencing periodic and continuing electricity rate increases. This is due to the Power Purchase Adjustment (PPA) formula imposed by the Energy Regulatory Board (ERB) using rural electric cooperatives as their unwilling collectors.

The PPA is an amount inserted into our electric bills and does not represent any cost related to the actual production or distribution of electricity. For Metro-Meralco consumers, the PPA is 2.08/kwh or one-third of consumers bills. In the electric cooperative franchise areas, the PPA is now 2.13/kwh and constitutes 67% of the total electricity bill. This forced payment of PPA amounts to at least P200 per month for poorer households to P1,000 and above for the rich.

For what and for whom is the PPA? It is a charge to recover P480 billion worth of overpriced contracts of the National Power Corporation (NPC) and Meralco to buy electricity from 35 independent power producers. This, we believe, is unconscionable.

We would like to pose several questions that we hope would spark intelligent discussion among energy-related government agencies, players in the power industry, electric consumers and the Filipino public in general.

- If the PPA has nothing to do with the cost of distribution, then why are five million poor rural member-consumers as well as those in urban areas being made to pay for it?
- Was there honest-to-goodness consultation in the ERB where civil society intervenors agreed to the PPA charge?
- Did the ERB officials actually believe that the PPA charge was in the public interest and not contrary to their charter?
- Was there transparency in the bidding process that led into the approval of the 35 IPP contracts?
- Did the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) investment coordinating committee recommend the approval of these contracts which resulted in $19.5 B worth of power-generating contracts with an alleged overprice of $10 billion?

We, the 119 electric cooperatives representing over five million small and marginalized rural electric consumers throughout the country appeal:

- That the ERB compel the National Power Corporation to furnish each electric cooperative and publish in all national newspapers their effective rate including basic rate, PPA, foreign exchange adjustment cost and other charges for transparency purposes.
- That the ERB validate the basis of these PPA charges through broad-based consultation with civil society.
- That Her Excellency President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo seriously consider halting the implementation of the PPA, which is an unjust burden, passed on to electric consumers.

We are confident that the present administration borne into office by people power will heed the appeal of electric consumers that represent the backbone of the rural electrification program.

ERNESTO C. PABLO
President
National Association of General Managers of Electric Cooperatives (NAGMEC)

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SUKELCO - Region XII

SUNNY ROSE A. MADAMBA
President
NORECO - Region VII

FELIXBERTO P. VERBA
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ADVT

Across the NATION

TONY BERGONIA, Assistant Editor

ROUNDUP

Mayon boosts Bicol tourism

LEGAZPI CITY—Mayon watch is helping boost the tourism industry in Bicol, a tourism official here said. Bicol tourism regional director Maria Ravanilla said her office noted an influx of foreign and domestic tourists since Mayon showed signs of restiveness. Mayon Volcano is still on alert level 3.

Job Belen, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

City faces trash suit

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Private garbage collectors here are suing the city government after the city council refused to pay them P16 million for collecting the city's garbage for more than a year. Puerto Princesa is a Hall of Fame awardee as the cleanest and greenest city in the country. Lawyer Carlo Gomez, counsel for the claimants, said they were just preparing the documents needed before they file their case in court. Gomez expressed sadness and surrender in continuing the fight in the council, since the council has already decided against their favor. *Ruelle Albert Castro, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Man hacks wife

VICTORIA, Laguna—A drunken jealous man stabbed his wife and killed his mother-in-law in Barangay San Francisco here Monday. Oscar Nantes, 47, laborer and native of Atimonan, Quezon, was overheard by witnesses complaining to his wife, Melady, 39, about her alleged refusal to have sex. Melady reportedly turned down Nantes' advances because her mother and the children were awake each time Nantes requested sex. Nantes went berserk and attacked his wife with a kitchen knife. He stabbed dead his mother-in-law Juliana Bongalin, 68, when she tried to pacify him. Village guards came to Melady's rescue and brought her to the Laguna provincial hospital where physicians declared her out of danger. Nantes fled but was arrested by residents and the local police.

Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

2M Bicolano voters

LEGAZPI CITY—The number of listed voters in the Bicol region has ballooned to 2 million compared to 1.3 million in 1998. Lawyer Zacarias Zaragosa, Commission on Elections regional director, said the number is expected to swell further with more voters being listed. Zaragosa said a significant number of voters consist of new registrants aged 18 and above who have become more politically conscious and want to participate in the elections.

Roly Embile, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Sugar shipment forfeited

LEGAZPI CITY—The Bureau of Customs in Bicol has forfeited a shipment of sugar owned by the National Food Authority in favor of the government. In October last year, at least 17,500 bags of sugar were transported to the Tabaco port from Batangas on board cargo vessel MV Marton and stored at the NFA warehouses in Tabaco and in this city. The shipment was for the then Erap Rolling Store project and to be distributed to various Erap *sari-sari* stores in the region, said lawyer Alwin Talde, NFA Bicol legal officer. District collector Marcial Lopez, however, confiscated the whole shipment on the belief that it was illegally transported.

Job Belen, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Gapo founder remembered

THE ASSASSINATION of Olongapo City's first mayor James Gordon 34 years ago is unsolved up to this day. This sad moment in Olongapo's history is given a fresh look as the city commemorates today the 34th death anniversary of Gordon, who was shot in the head by a hired assassin at the city hall. Born and raised in Olongapo, then under American military rule as a US naval reservation, the old Gordon denounced US authorities for their unjust treatment of Filipinos. He worked for the turnover of Olongapo to the Philippine government in 1959 and became its first elected municipal mayor in a landslide victory in 1963.

JDV uses GMA in return bid

DAGUPAN CITY—Not even President Macapagal-Arroyo can persuade Pangasinan Rep. Benjamin Lim from withdrawing his candidacy in favor of returning former Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr.

Ms Macapagal arrived here on a private visit on Sunday but De Venecia apparently took that opportunity to ask her to resolve the brewing congressional fight between the two Lakas stalwarts.

Instead of clearing the air, however, Lim and De Venecia issued conflicting statements that seemed to worsen their political problem.

It all started when the President raised the hands of both Lim and De Venecia for a photo opportunity, sending different signals to each of the congressional candidate.

De Venecia interpreted it as an endorsement for him to run for a House seat and for Lim to run as city mayor.

"We have successfully worked out a win-win formula, with (Lim) running for mayor. We are also appealing to Vice Mayor Teodoro Manaois to participate in the peace making process (to come up) with a united ticket . . . (which would be formed within 72 hours)," the former Speaker said.

Lim looked bewildered, saying he had no idea about the meaning of the President's gesture.

After meeting with Ms Macapagal, De Venecia and Mayor Alipio Fernandez Jr., who is also running for a congressional seat, Lim told reporters here, "It's like a pressure cooker inside." He did not elaborate.

De Venecia later followed and called him to join the President for the raising of the hands.

"It was persuasive, creative diplomacy," Lim later told the reporters when asked whether he was pressured to step aside in favor of the former Speaker.

Asked to interpret the President's move, Lim said the raising of their hands has a lot of meanings.

"Maybe (it) was an endorsement for both of us. It could mean a lot of things. Maybe (the President) is rooting for both of us (for Congress). We are both Lakas originals."

He said the fourth district residents should wait for some developments to make the decision conclusive.

"We just raised our hands. It could mean the President supports both of us. As to what position, we do not know," he added.

He reiterated his decision to pursue his bid for the fourth congressional district as an independent.

"If my stepping aside would be for the greater good for the province eventually, maybe yes. But if it would be just serving the interest of some persons, I don't think I would agree because I myself (would) have sacrificed my own ambition," he said.

He said he met De Venecia and Fernandez on Saturday to thresh out their problems, but refused to give details of the meeting. *Yolanda Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southwestern Luzon and Western Visayas will have rains and gusty winds and the coastal waters of these areas will be moderate to rough. The rest of Luzon and rest of Visayas will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. Mindanao will be partly cloudy with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila Hi 29° Lo 23°	**Baguio** Hi 25° Lo 11°	**Tuguegarao** Hi 29° Lo 20°	**Laoag** Hi 32° Lo 23°
Clark Zone Hi 29° Lo 21°	**Tagaytay** Hi 28° Lo 18°	**Legazpi** Hi 28° Lo 24°	**Calapan** Hi 30° Lo 23°
Bacolod Hi 28° Lo 23°	**Roxas** Hi 27° Lo 24°	**Cebu** Hi 29° Lo 23°	**Tacloban** Hi 30° Lo 24°
Gen. Santos Hi 31° Lo 23°	**Zamboanga** Hi 33° Lo 25°	**Cagayan de Oro** Hi 28° Lo 23°	**Davao** Hi 28° Lo 23°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research

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Thousands more lose jobs in S. Mindanao

DAVAO CITY—The unemployment rate in Southern Mindanao has increased from 7.1 percent in 1999 to 9.7 percent last year as government created fewer job opportunities for the people in the region, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) here said.

The DOLE said the government's all-out war policy against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) last year and political instability in the country turned off potential investors, keeping employment opportunities in the region down.

Manuel Roldan, DOLE regional director based here, said the region continues to feel the effects of economic uncertainties last year as more firms last month reported that they were closing shop and trimming down their workforce.

DOLE records showed that the number of workers who lost their jobs due to retrenchment and closures increased three folds from 190 workers in January last year to 579 during the same period this year.

Closures

The DOLE also reported that nine more firms closed last January, compared to only five in the same period last year.

For the whole of last year, the DOLE also recorded a bleak labor situation with 52 firms closing shop, displacing 1,772 workers.

About 5,000 workers lost their jobs due to retrenchment and firm closures for the whole year of 2000.

Roldan said most of the firms cited high costs of doing business due to the soaring peso-dollar exchange rate, peace and order problems, redundancy of workers and competition as among the reasons for either closing shop or trimming down their workforce.

"We are still feeling the pinch of the crisis last year," Roldan said.

He also said while business confidence has returned to the country following the assumption of President Macapagal to power, traders are still holding on to their money and are not investing in Mindanao.

'Wait-and-see'

Roldan said some businesses are in a wait-and-see attitude over the outcome of the legal challenges posed by ousted President Joseph Estrada and his supporters to the Macapagal presidency.

Roldan said investors also expressed apprehension over the outcome of the May 14 elections. He said a victory of pro-Estrada senatorial, congressional and local candidates may likely affect government efficiency as he expects questions to be raised on the legality of President Macapagal's stay in office and her policies.

Earlier, Joji Ilagan-Bian, chair of the Mindanao Business Council (MBC), also said while foreign investors have expressed confidence in doing business in the country after President Macapagal assumed power, actual investments were not coming in.

Bian said the MBC had difficulty selling Mindanao to foreign traders during recent sales pitch in Manila due to questions over peace and order problems and the security of the island.

Bian urged the government, particularly the Department of Foreign Affairs, to make it known officially to the diplomatic community about ongoing efforts to resume peace talks with the MILF and the communist-led National Democratic Front (NDF). ***Jowel Canuday, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

MEN CAN'T SWIM

'Muro-ami' recruits are mountain folk

By Alex Pal
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—Mayor Valente Yap of Bindoy town admitted he was helpless in preventing the men of his town from working in fishing vessels engaged in *muro-ami* or *pa-aling* operations.

He said most of the men who join these fishing operations from his town are farmers from the mountain village of Nalundan who do not even know how to swim.

"Some of them may know how to swim because they probably learn to swim in the river, but they are not really used to swimming in the ocean," he said.

Yap said he could not stop these people from joining fishing vessels because they are of legal age and could do what they want.

He said what he did was only to make sure that the fishing company provided adequate social security coverage to their workers, specially those coming from his town.

The mayor also said he would check the list of workers to ensure that no minors were drafted into the hazardous fishing operations.

Muro-ami is a method where fishermen use stone weights to pound on coral reefs and seabed to scare fish and drive them to waiting nets. The government has banned this practice because it is destructive to corals.

Pa-aling, according to some, is a safer variation of *muro-ami*. Bubbles blown from air compressors are used to frighten the fish and force them to swim to the nets.

Acceptable?

The government has accepted the *pa-aling* method but environmentalists say this is still destructive to the corals because the divers occasionally scrape the corals and break them.

Some of the 35 fishermen from Negros Oriental who have escaped from FB Unity I in Palawan were from Bindoy. The rest were the town of Sta. Catalina and the cities of Dumaguete and Bais.

The fishermen escaped from the fishing boat on Feb. 9, claiming they could no longer stand the inhuman treatment they were getting from the ship's crew members.

Yap said he heard of the plight of the 35 fishermen and was coordinating with the provincial government to determine what his office can do to help them.

The fishermen are expected to be back in Negros Oriental this week. Ten of them are now in Puerto Princesa City but the rest were still in Barangay Caruray, in the island town of San Vicente, Palawan.

The fishermen first went to Barangay Caruray to seek help shortly after escaping from the vessel.

Rod Saucelo, executive assistant of Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn, earlier told Negros Occidental Gov. Rafael Coscolluela that FB Unity I was engaged in *muro-ami*.

He also told Coscolluela that 10 of the 35 fishermen who escaped from the vessel were minors and were placed in the custody of the Puerto Princesa City government.

Eliseo "Bloy" Audencia, Unity Fishing Corp. branch manager, denied that their company was hiring minors and was maltreating their fishermen.

Denials

He denied that the company practices *muro-ami*. What the fishing firm practices, he added, is *pa-aling*, which is allowed by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources.

But in Puerto Princesa City, the fishermen stuck to their story that they were being maltreated by their masters.

They identified one of their tormentors as a certain Benjamin Esturas of Sibulan, Dumaguete.

One of the fishermen, Joel Lastimoso, said they were recruited by a certain Ronie Relasa, who promised them a good job in the fishing vessel, though they were not told how much they would be paid.

The fishermen got P1,000 each in cash advances.

In the ship, the fishermen said in Cebuano that they scared fish out and drove them into the waiting nets with ropes that had lead rings tied to their ends.

The fishermen added that they were also told to use cyanide to force fish out.

Some of the fishermen said they were unaware that what they did was illegal.

The fishermen also claimed that they were also forced to dive even when they were sick or hit with a rope or an oar by Esturas when they stopped diving.

Sometimes, Lastimoso claimed, they were not allowed to eat. ***With a report from Ruelle Albert Castro, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

Roses missing in Baguio flower festival

By The PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

DESPITE the absence of roses, the Baguio flower festival pushed through and attracted hundreds of thousands of visitors from all over the country and the world.
TOOTS SOBERANO

BAGUIO CITY—The rose's absence became the everlasting's (*Helichrysum bracteatum*) gain in this year's Baguio flower festival.

As more than 30 floral floats rolled down Session Road here for the second part of the opening parade of Panagbengă 2001 Sunday, thousands of tourists and residents were treated to an assortment of colors minus Baguio's famous roses.

Most of the floral floats were decked with Baguio's other famous flower, the yellow-brown everlasting, and other locally grown flowers like chrysanthemums, carnations, anthuriums and daisies in various colors.

Rose growers in La Trinidad, Benguet have been suffering from low production since November last year because of mites.

Farmers in the village of Bahong, La Trinidad, acknowledged in some agricultural circles as the "Rose Garden of the Philippines," reported that supply had since dropped due to the mite infestation.

At least 80 hectares of farms in Bahong, which supply roses to Baguio and Metro Manila markets, are solely devoted to gardens that produce at least 100,000 dozens of rose per hectare a year.

Roses used to sell for P20 a dozen but the mite attacks pushed its price to at least P45 a dozen.

Everlasting is cheaper as it sells for at least P10 a lei.

Most of the floral floats that joined the parade were sponsored by local banks, hotels, restaurants, fastfood branches and telecommunications firms. Other floats were sponsored by a soy sauce brand, an ice cream maker and a pain reliever brand.

Representatives of the floats gave away candies, key chains, soy sauce packets and Biogesic and Diatabs pills to spectators.

Other participants included the Baguio City government, the Benguet State University, Teachers' Camp, a local cooperative and the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office.

Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon, in a press conference on Sunday, said he was impressed with the Baguio community's efforts to organize a festival that attracted a huge number of tourists.

At least 150,000 tourists and residents witnessed this year's flower festival parades.

Gordon said the festival greatly benefits Baguio, which is still among the most sought after tourist destinations in the country.

Gordon, who joined the opening parade on Saturday, was surprised by the apparent excitement of visitors and residents over the event.

However, Gordon was disappointed with the traffic congestion at the height of the celebration.

"We're not tourist-friendly. This is a positive analysis of what's happening, especially in a place geared for tourism like Baguio," he said. "With the congestion (during the festival), I don't think anybody would want to come back." ***Reports from Robert Abaño, Vincent Cabreza, Avigail Olarte and Helen Juanillas, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Crime lures victims of Pinatubo

CLARK FIELD, Pampanga—Many lahar victims resort to a life of crime because of the government's failure to provide them livelihood opportunities, the Ugnayan ng Mamamayan Laban sa Kahirapan at Dislokasyon (Ugnayan) said Friday.

This developed as some 20 busloads of lahar victims from seven Mt. Pinatubo resettlement centers in this province were expected to be at Malacañang yesterday to ask President Macapagal-Arroyo to exempt them from paying their lots and housing units.

In a press forum here Friday, Diosdado Sabangan, Ugnayan-Pampanga coordinator, said many lahar victims were driven to robbery, prostitution and drug pushing to earn money and feed their families.

The Ugnayan leaders said they would go to Malacañang to petition Ms Macapagal to nullify the contract of usufruct imposed by the national government on lahar-displaced families who had been awarded resettlement units.

The contract authorizes lahar victims to occupy their housing units subject to the payment of monthly amortization for 25 years.

The lots are not covered by the payment and do not automatically become property of the lahar victims under the contract.

Ugnayan leaders said the government would earn some P13 billion from the contract.

Sabangan said they would also ask Ms Macapagal to resettle the remaining 6,000 families who have been living in bunkhouses for five years now.

They would also ask the President to:

- Provide some 50,000 lahar-displaced families livelihood programs by using mothballed productivity centers in various resettlement centers.
- Order the operation of mothballed hospital buildings in resettlement centers.
- Rehabilitate farms in lahar-covered towns.
- Investigate and prosecute Mt. Pinatubo Commission officials involved in various irregularities. ***Jun Malig, PDI Central Luzon Desk***

Political detainees' release seen key to new talks

SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga—At least 47 suspected New People's Army rebels and 26 Muslims languishing in jail as political prisoners will most likely be released late next week, an INQUIRER source privy to the reopening of peace talks between the Macapagal administration and communist rebels said Friday.

The source, who on Thursday night attended the meeting of the peace talks' working panel in Metro Manila, quoted Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita as saying that "it will not take one week before all political prisoners are released."

Ermita, according to the source, has instructed Justice Secretary Hernando Perez "to expedite the release" of the political prisoners by contacting all judges and prosecutors in courts where the prisoners have pending criminal cases.

Perez also chairs the parole and pardons bureau.

Ermita, the source said, was expecting the Communist Party of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front to reciprocate by releasing Army Maj. Noel Buan, the intelligence chief of the Southern Luzon Command, and Chief Insp. Abelardo Martin, police chief of Dolores, Quezon.

The NPA has held Buan and Martin captive for more than a year now.

In a related development, Cielo Buan, the wife of Major Buan, renewed her appeal for the immediate release of her husband and Martin.

But Cielo said she was especially appealing for the immediate release of Martin as his wife Nenita had been on the "verge of suicide."

The only child of the Martin couple died of leukemia last March without the police officer seeing the child.

"She is full of anguish. Without Abelardo, she told me she has no more reason to live," Cielo told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

Peace talks with the communist rebels collapsed under the Estrada administration when the Philippine Senate ratified the Visiting Forces Agreement between the Philippines and the United States despite warnings made by the communists that it could cause the talks' collapse.

The VFA, according to the underground National Democratic Front, would allow US military forces to use virtually the entire Philippines for war games, as temporary bases for their war ships and planes, rest and recreation facilities and loading docks. ***Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk***

Homes for war evacuees ready for occupancy

By Charlie Señase
PDI Mindanao Bureau

COTABATO CITY—The government's P16.3-million housing project for residents who were displaced by the Estrada administration's all-out war last year will be completed by next month.

Mayor Moises Arendain of Carmen, North Cotabato, said more than 600 of the 817 houses that were built with the help of different government agencies and local governments are ready for occupancy.

"By the end of February, the remaining 200 plus (houses) would already be completed," Arendain said.

The "core shelters," located in the 11 villages of Carmen, site of last year's intense fighting between government troops and Moro Islamic Liberation Front rebels, are under close guard by government militiamen, he added.

Arendain said the rehabilitation work is confined to Barangays Cadiis, Malapag, Liliongan, Ranzo, Manili, Lanoon, Lanugas, Pebpoloan, Manarapan, Ugalingan and Katanayanan, where most of the houses were burned during the war.

"I am happy that the peace and order situation in Carmen has greatly improved as it will now pave the return of the evacuees to their places of origin," Arendain said.

Senator demands new probe of war games deaths

By Connie Fernandez
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Sen. Sergio Osmeña III has asked Director Gen. Leandro Mendoza, Philippine National Police chief, to reinvestigate the death of two boys and the wounding of another during an explosion inside an abandoned mine that was used for joint RP-US war games.

Osmeña wrote to Mendoza on Feb. 16 asking that a thorough investigation was necessary to reopen the case against the 39 American and Filipino sailors involved in the military exercises.

He said the complaint could be refiled, even if it was dismissed by the Toledo City prosecutor's office because the sailors had not been arraigned in court.

Osmeña said he could not allow the case to be dismissed on a mere technicality because a similar case may happen in the future.

"(The case) must be pursued so that the courts may punish such criminal acts of US military personnel in the Philippines," the senator said.

Osmeña, one of the senators who voted against the ratification of the Visiting Forces Agreement in 1999, said the dismissal of the case was not based solely on the affidavits of desistance filed by the victims' parents.

Lack of evidence against the sailors was another factor that led to the dropping of the case, he added.

"The dismissal based on the weakness of evidence only shows the failure of the local police force to build up a decent case," he wrote.

"This is despite the availability of witnesses and other (pieces of) evidence to prove the case against the respondents."

The resolution of the case, he said, will make soldiers taking part in war exercises to be more prudent in dealing with civilians.

"It may allow the Senate, which ratified the treaty, to review its (VFA) provisions or maybe terminate it altogether," Osmeña said.

Cousins Rolly Navales, 17, and Arnelo Gaviola, 13, were killed on Aug. 19 after playing with a live M203 grenade they found at an abandoned mining site of the Atlas Consolidated Mining and Development Corp. in Barangay Don Andres Soriano, Toledo. Their cousin, Jordan Villarmia, 10, was wounded in the explosion.

The grenade was used during and was apparently left behind after the military exercise, dubbed as "Flash Piston," at the abandoned mine site.

Charges of homicide with physical injuries through negligence were filed against the sailors but these were later dismissed after the victims' parents signed affidavits of desistance.

Pedro and Victoria Navales, Rolly's parents, and Anselmo and Remegia Gaviola, Arnel's parents, later confirmed they were paid P1.5 million to drop the case.

They said they received P500,000 each on Jan. 7 from Edgar Gica, the Cebu-based lawyer of the Philippine Navy. Another P500,000 was given to the parents of Villarmia.

Anselmo claimed that the money was handed to them by lawyer Elias Espinosa, Integrated Bar of the Philippines-Cebu chapter president and Gica's law partner.

Both denied participation in the alleged pay-off. Espinosa said he only notarized the affidavits of desistance of the victims' parents.

Of the P1.5 million paid to them, the parents said P650,000 went to their lawyer, Achilles Cañete, who had recommended the withdrawal of the case.

Cañete initially denied receiving any amount from his clients but later admitted in a radio interview that he got P650,000.

He said the decision to give him the money was voluntary on the part of his clients. He also said that not all of the P650,000 went to him but he refused to elaborate, invoking the client-lawyer confidentiality rule. ***With a report from Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau***

Jockeying generals . . .

(From page A1)

make a choice."

President Macapagal-Arroyo "will carry the burden of choosing the appropriate person" when outgoing Chief of Staff Gen. Angelo Reyes retires on his 56th birthday on March 17, Ermita added.

De los Santos, a highly decorated combat fighter, stepped into the limelight in January last year as the first Filipino military official to head a UN peacekeeping force. Last August, after his stint in strife-torn East Timor, he headed the AFP's Visayas Command.

The general, a graduate of PMA Class 1969, whose image as a world-class soldier has been carefully built up by public relations practitioners, is reportedly being backed up by Justice Secretary Hernando Perez and Presidential Adviser Paul Dominguez.

Calimlim, however, has the backing of former President Fidel Ramos, while Villanueva has the endorsement of Reyes, who is being considered for the defense portfolio.

For his part, Espinosa enjoys the support of Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, retired general Fortunato Abat, and leaders of Copa or Council of Philippine Affairs—all of whom played a part in former President Joseph Estrada's downfall.

"Watch out: Calimlim, Villanueva and Espinosa will be thrashed in calculated media attacks, while De los Santos will remain clean on the sidelines," a Camp Aguinaldo source claimed.

Espinosa

There is already talk that Espinosa's official military records, pertaining to his unceremonious relief as commander of the Southern Command last year, will be leaked soon.

Espinosa has been linked to Zamboanga-based businessman Lepeng Wee, who in turn has been linked to illegal business activities. The businessman has vehemently denied such allegations.

Though a three-star general, Espinosa has been relegated to the post of commandant of the AFP's Joint Command and Staff College, a position usually held by single-star or brigadier generals.

Villanueva's critics portray him as a "clone" of Reyes, and charge that his appointment would be part of a plan to cover up alleged irregularities during Reyes' stint.

Calimlim, second-in-command to Reyes, is closely associated with the disgraced former President, and so his image is easy to tarnish, according to military watchers.

No danger

Ermita emphasized that the contest among the generals and their respective backers would not affect the unity within the military because the lobby efforts "are really nothing but statements of preference."

He said President Macapagal was thoroughly and "properly informed" of the histories and qualifications of those on the short list of candidates.

Ms Macapagal is expected to announce her choice on March 15.

In an interview with the INQUIRER, Ermita added that there was no danger that the competition would lead to restiveness in the military.

"It is normal for everyone to aspire, but because of high professionalism in the AFP, they'll be able to overcome" their differences, he said of the reported squabbling.

"There is nothing to worry about," Ermita added. "The AFP is a very mature organization."

He asked people to "just wait and leave it to the President to do the right thing in appointing a new AFP chief," adding that it did not help that "everyone is making their own speculations" on who would be appointed.

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2 senators . . .

(From page A1)

"capable" official, the soldiers would view his appointment as a reward for his withdrawal of support from Joseph Estrada on Jan. 20.

Senate President Aquilino Pimentel Jr. aired a similar comment.

Pimentel said there was no question that Reyes was fully qualified to be defense secretary, "but you cannot remove the suspicion that it is an appointment intended to placate him because of the shortening of his term . . . (and) the revocation of the extension previously granted him by President Estrada."

The Senate President, as well as Karapatan, a group of human rights advocates, also raised civilian supremacy over the military as a point against Reyes' appointment.

Biazon noted that the AFP was "so politicized already," and that "using political issues as a basis for the appointment is not going to strengthen the (military) forces professionally."

He said appointing Reyes as defense secretary would "further politicize" the AFP. "So I hope the President would make appointments on the basis of merit, not because of what they did at Edsa II," he added.

The withdrawal of support from Estrada by the military and police is believed to have paved the way for his leaving Malacañang and Ms Macapagal's oath-taking as President.

But Biazon said that "if we include politics as a major factor in the appointment to major positions in the defense establishment, then we would be prostituting the professionalism of the soldiers."

"And remember," he said, "the Constitution is very, very clear, that the military (should be) apolitical."

He reiterated that the practice of the Philippine Military Academy alumni of adopting politicians should be reviewed as it was adding to the politicization of the military.

Good choice but...

Estrada had extended the term of Reyes up to July 9, 2002. But Ms Macapagal chose not to honor this and announced that Reyes would retire on his 56th birthday on March 17.

Pimentel acknowledged that aside from merit, Ms Macapagal would consider a chief of staff with whom she had a special bond of trust and confidence.

He said that while Reyes could be a "good choice," the Department of National Defense should be led by a civilian in keeping with the concept of civilian supremacy over the military.

"Ideally, (the post) should go to a civilian official who knows what national defense is all about," he said.

Pimentel also said there should be a limit to the appointment of military men to the Cabinet.

"I suppose that since Ms Macapagal-Arroyo (assumed) power in an unusual manner, she has to balance things out in that respect by getting a sizeable number of nominees from the military to fill up civilian positions. But let me say that is not an ideal situation," he said.

Biazon said he was experiencing difficulty in reconciling the various institutions after People Power II.

"I still believe that we are in a revolutionary situation at the moment," he said.

He said questions about the defection of the military were hounding the PMA, and even Filipinos in Nairobi, Kenya, where he attended a global housing meeting last week.

According to Biazon, the legal question pending in the Supreme Court regarding the legitimacy of the Macapagal presidency should first be settled before Estrada is prosecuted.

"What if the prosecution against Estrada starts and then this petition (in the Supreme Court) is decided in (his) favor? He will still have immunity. What happens to the prosecution (cases)? These will have to be abandoned," Biazon said.

'War hawk'

In Davao City, Evelyn Carias, chair of the Khadidja Moro Women Alliance, said the President should not reward a "war hawk" like Reyes.

Carias said Reyes was one of the "architects" of Estrada's all-out war campaign against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, which displaced thousands and killed hundreds of Moro civilians in Central Mindanao.

"Why should the President reward a war hawk? Reyes' hands are tainted with the blood of the Moro people," she said.

Carias also urged Ms Macapagal to set up a "war tribunal" to try Estrada, his Cabinet officials and his generals including Reyes for their alleged "war crimes."

Karapatan-Southern Mindanao secretary general Joel Virador said that if Ms Macapagal appointed Reyes as defense chief, she would be reneging on the promise she made at her inaugural that she would work for the healing of the nation.

"For the victims of the war, healing will only happen if justice is served. Reyes is the top implementor of Estrada's all-out war, so he should be made accountable for launching the war," Virador said.

He said that the top DND post was for a civilian, and that the retirement of a general did not make him a civilian in "mind and spirit." *With a report from Jowel F. Canuday, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

The 2001-2002 PLDT - DPC

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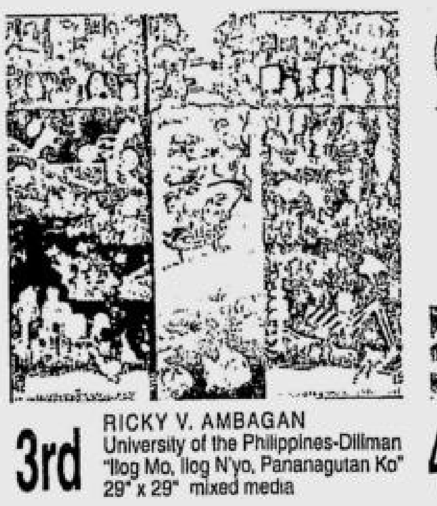
Theme: "ILOG PASIGlahin"

Congratulations Winners:

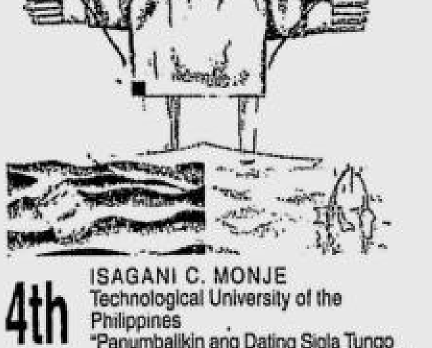
Grand Prize
RONNIE T. TRES REYES
University of the East-Kalookan
"Ang Ilog Pasig Noon, Ay Siya na Muli Ngayon"
29" x 29", oil/ acrylic

Exhibit until February 24, 2001 Ayala Museum, Makati City

2nd
FROILAN L. CALAYAG
Technological University of the Philippines
"Sa Ilog, Ang Misteryosong Nais Makita"
29" x 29", mixed media



3rd
RICKY V. AMBAGAN
University of the Philippines-Diliman
"Ilog Mo, Ilog N'yo, Pananagutan Ko"
29" x 29" mixed media



4th
ISAGANI C. MONJE
Technological University of the Philippines
"Panumbalikin ang Dating Sigla Tungo sa Kinabukasan ng Bawat Isa..."
29" x 29", oil on canvas

5th
CONCHITA Z. LUZARRAGA
College of the Holy Spirit
"Pag-ahon sa Kinabukasan"
24" x 24", mixed media

1st Honorable Mention
CARLO M. CAACBAY
Bulacan State University
"Natitirang Buhay, Muling Bigyang Kulay at Husay ng Ating Mga Kamay"
29" x 29", acrylic

2nd Honorable Mention
JERRY R. MANINANG
University of the East-Kalookan
"PASIGlahin nATIN ITO"
27" x 27", mixed media

3rd Honorable Mention
PATRICK F. LACHICA
FEATI University
"Ani ng Ilog"
27" x 27", acrylic and glue on board

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Laarni's ₱650M revealed

(From page A1)

groups. They want Estrada's assets, estimated at P20 billion, seized.

Four other banks—Rizal Commercial Banking Corp., Allied Bank, Bank of Commerce and Urban Bank—earlier expressed willingness to turn over the statements of account of Estrada and his mistresses.

Joy, Peachy and Rowena

Aside from Gomez and Enriquez, Desierto requested the banks to surrender the statements of account of Estrada's other mistresses—Joy Melendrez, Peachy Osorio and Rowena Lopez.

Desierto disclosed that Allied Bank, whose majority stockholder is Lucio Tan, had not submitted Estrada's bank records to his office.

"The bank wants to know if the Foreign Currency Deposit Act (FCDA) can be superseded by the Ombudsman's authority to examine bank records," Desierto said.

"My answer, which we will tell him in writing tomorrow, is that present jurisprudence states that the FCDA provides for secrecy to foreign investor dollar accounts, not to the local depositors," he said.

Desierto said the Ombudsman Act was passed after the FCDA. "Therefore its authority is intended to cover accounts covered by this Act (FCDA). Meaning, there's no exception."

Binondo forex dealer

There are reports that part of the funds withdrawn from the Jose Velarde account with Equitable PCI Bank had been transferred to an account of a foreign exchange dealer in an apparent bid to have the money transferred abroad.

A member of the House prosecution panel, who asked not to be named, said he received reports that Estrada had transferred about P300 million to a foreign exchange trader based in Binondo.

"The transactions occurred around November and December. It could be part of a plan to transfer it abroad," the source said.

The P3.2-billion Velarde account with Equitable PCI Bank was closed on Nov. 13, the same day that the House of Representatives impeached Estrada.

Moreno said the search for the hidden Estrada funds should be speeded up as the former President could muddle the paper trail.

"I urge the Ombudsman to act with dispatch and issue the pertinent subpoena duces tecum to the stock brokerage companies especially those which are part of bank conglomerates, not only local but also foreign," he said.

"Otherwise these investments may escape the dragnet that the Ombudsman is supposed to put in place," he said.

"Until any order freezing these accounts is issued, there is no legal impediment to these accounts being moved," he warned.

Moreno said the subpoenas should cover savings, time and current accounts.

He said Estrada might have placed investments using managed accounts through the trust departments of banks.

Commercial papers

"There could also be other accounts placed with brokerage companies and we have it on good source that the former President invested also in long-term and short-term commercial papers using brokerage firms as conduits," he said.

Moreno said that the subpoenas issued by the Ombudsman pertained only to deposits or trust accounts.

These do not include investments in long-term and short-term commercial papers coursed through stockbrokerage companies.

These commercial papers can be transferred to other investors especially if these are in "bearer" form, which can be sold anytime, according to Moreno.

He warned that if the assets were transferred to a third party, the buyer could be penalized under the law on forfeiture.

GUIA Gomez: Amount of PS Bank deposit still undisclosed

LAARNI Enriquez: Unemployed multimillionaire

Gag Desierto, Erap begs high court

(From page A1)

"Precisely I'm saying he's no longer the President . . . That's why we're trying to prosecute him," the Associated Press quoted him as saying.

The Ombudsman has formed a special panel to investigate Estrada on at least six criminal charges, including economic plunder, bribery and corruption.

In his motion filed with the tribunal, Saguisag said Desierto's statements were "deplorable," making a fair investigation impossible.

"He cannot act with an evil eye and with an unequal hand without offending the equal protection clause. Since self-restraint is not in the cards, a gag order is in order," Saguisag told the court.

He also urged the tribunal to advise Desierto to exclude himself from the investigation, saying he was biased.

But Desierto said he would not withdraw from the investigation unless more reasonable grounds were presented.

Desierto said he could not report on controverting evidence in the six cases because Estrada refused to submit any.

Justice Secretary Hernando B. Perez scoffed at Saguisag's motion for a gag order, saying Desierto should not be prevented from doing his job.

"At the rate he's going, he would want everybody gagged in the end," said Perez whom Saguisag also accused of being biased.

Filing of cases

Whatever, Desierto said Monday he would seek to have Estrada jailed next week on corruption charges.

DESIERTO: Prejudging

SAGUISAG: Deplorable

He said a special panel had completed its investigation and was now ready to file the cases in the Sandiganbayan.

According to Desierto, there is sufficient evidence to support plunder, corruption, and related charges against Estrada which would result in his immediate detention.

But he has been blocked from laying the charges while the Supreme Court hears arguments over Estrada's petition questioning Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's assumption of the presidency on Jan. 20 at the height of Edsa People Power II.

Estrada has also asked the high court to stop the Ombudsman's investigation, saying he was still the real President and therefore enjoyed immunity from prosecution.

The court last week asked Desierto to temporarily suspend the investigation for seven days—until next Monday—while it considered the arguments.

Desierto said he would be ready to announce the result of the probe as soon as the court gave the green light.

"We'll be on time, on schedule," he said.

Private prosecutors claim Estrada amassed as much as P20 billion during his 31 months in office and stashed it in 15 accounts in 15 banks under at least six aliases.

Estrada, who received a monthly salary of about P50,000 as President, has denied any wrongdoing.

Justice Secretary Perez also said Monday that Estrada faced immediate arrest upon the filing of the cases in the Sandiganbayan.

"Plunder is a non-bailable, capital offense," he told a local radio station.

The Macapagal administration earlier ruled out house arrest for Estrada, saying he must be jailed like all the others accused of capital offenses.

Sandiganbayan

The Sandiganbayan is busy preparing for Estrada's trial, including his detention cell.

Sandiganbayan Sheriff Ed Urieta told the INQUIRER that Presiding Justice Francis Garchitorena talked with members of the Kapisanan ng mg Broadkaster sa Pilipinas last week about the possibility of doing live broadcasts during the trial.

Representatives of various television networks were given a tour of the Sandiganbayan's premises.

Urieta, however, said the media coverage of the trial would still need the Supreme Court's approval.

Asked where Estrada would be held once the trial got under way, Urieta said the Sandiganbayan had a detention cell measuring 24 square meters.

"If the cases against him are filed, he would be kept there for the duration of the trial . . . Or, depending on the court order, he could be detained in another jail," he said. *With reports from Michael Lim Ubac, Martin P. Marfil, AP and AFP*

Barbers returns from US throat surgery

(From page A1)

Barbers and his wife left for the United States on Oct. 17.

He was away during the entirety of Estrada's impeachment trial and the people's uprising triggered by the Jan. 16 Senate vote against the opening of the second envelope said to contain evidence on the "Jose Velarde" accounts.

"This is the legitimate government and I fully support President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo not because we belong to the same party, Lakas-NUCD, but because I believe in her aspirations and vision for our country and people," Barbers said in his statement.

He said Ms Macapagal and Teofisto Guingona were the country's legitimate President and Vice President.

On the new PNP chief, Barbers said Mendoza was the "logical" choice because of "his dedication to the service, work ethic, and commitment to the ideals of a true law enforcement officer."

Barbers, a former police colonel who served as interior secretary during the Ramos administration, also vouched for Mendoza's capability to discharge his duties.

He expressed confidence that Mendoza would be a "strong asset" in the government's efforts to maintain peace and order, and said Mendoza's appointment should be made permanent.

According to the statement, Barbers went through speech therapy after surgery.

His throat ailment was discovered during a medical checkup in the United States.

Late last year, Congressman Barbers said his father would be coming home on Dec. 20 or 21. It was not explained why the trip did not push through.

'Auring' leaves 18 dead

(From page A1)

In Baybay town, an elderly woman died while 32 others were injured when the passenger vessel MV Cherry Rose ran aground some 200 meters from the port.

Astilita Gocela, 70, of Barangay Ponponan in Baybay, reportedly succumbed to a heart attack as she was being transferred from the ship to a life raft.

Some 30 other passengers, 12 of them children, sustained bruises and abrasions when strong winds and big waves pummeled the vessel. All of them were brought for treatment at the Western Leyte Provincial Hospital in Baybay town.

Most of the passengers were from Leyte returning home from Cebu.

Another woman, Nora Oliabe, 45, drowned in Baragnay Belen, Leyte-Leyte.

In Palompon, Leyte, an inter-island vessel, MV Cristina, also ran aground when it sought refuge in a nearby cove. No one among some 30 people on board was reported killed.

Several towns including Dagami, Dulag, Baybay, Tabontabon, Palo and Burauen were flooded when rivers overflowed. In some areas the waters were as high as five feet.

A whirlwind also hit Tacloban Sunday morning. No one was reported hurt.

Flights were resumed in Tacloban City yesterday after these were cancelled on Sunday due to bad weather.

Missing Taiwanese student

On Boracay Island, strong waves spawned by Auring hampered yesterday's search for Gloria Chang, a Taiwanese student. She has been reported missing since Feb. 14 after strong winds carried her kayak into the open sea.

Master Sgt. Mike Labatiao said the Boracay search and rescue team and the Coast Guard would continue the search for the student.

Walton Chang, the father of the missing woman, arrived in Boracay on Feb. 16 together with Brad Liu, secretary of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Manila.

In Davao Oriental, floods caused by heavy rains forced some 3,500 residents to evacuate to higher grounds on Sunday, bringing to at least 163,000 the number of people affected by the storm.

As of yesterday, damage to crops and infrastructure was placed at P200 million, according to separate reports from the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) in Davao City, the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) and the Office of the Presidential Assistant for Mindanao (Opamin).

Floodwaters in Carmen, Davao del Norte, started to subside yesterday, allowing thousands of commuters stranded since Saturday night to pass through the flooded roads.

But Antonio Cloma, OCD assistant regional director, said most of the 14 towns affected by the floods in the provinces of Davao del Norte, Davao Oriental and Compostela Valley, remained submerged in water.

In Caraga town, Davao Oriental, the flood swamped the houses of some 3,445 people, forcing most of them to flee to public schools on Sunday, according to reports reaching the OCD yesterday.

Cloma said the flood in Caraga town also destroyed infrastructure facilities like the Don Leon Baluarte Road, a strategic farm-to-market road in the area.

Submerged houses

On Sunday, records from the NDCC and the Opamin noted that floodwaters submerged the houses of 159,785 people in Agusan del Sur, Surigao [illegible] Sur, Davao del Norte and Compostela Valley.

That figure did not include the residents affected by the flood in Davao Oriental.

Cloma said that in Southern Mindanao alone, the flood destroyed about P100 million worth of infrastructure and crops, mostly rice, corn and bananas.

Another P112.5 million worth of crops and facilities had been destroyed in Agusan del Sur and Surigao del Sur, according to separate reports from the NDCC and the Opamin.

Melcar Estella, OCD regional assistant director, said they had issued warnings to all residents in the flood-affected areas against drinking water from the flooded rivers as these may be contaminated with water-borne diseases.

But he said several boxes of medicines for diarrhea had been sent to the affected areas.

Public storm warning is still in effect over Panay, Romblon, Mindoro provinces, Calamian Group of Islands, Cuyo Island, northern Palawan, Marinduque, Batangas and Lubang Island.

These will have rains and winds of not more than 45 kph. Coastal waters will be moderate to rough. *With reports from Cynthia D. Balana and Carlito Pablo in Manila; and Joey Gabieta and Hazel Villa, PDI Visayas Bureau*

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SPORTS

AL S. MENDOZA, Editor ▣ EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA, Assistant Editor

Hingis outplays Testud, 6-3, 6-2

DOHA, Qatar—Top-seeded Martina Hingis of Switzerland overpowered third-seeded Sandrine Testud of France 6-3, 6-2 on Sunday to win the $ 170,000 Qatar Open. Hingis outclassed Testud in just 60 minutes to win the top prize of $27,000. Testud collected a check for $ 14,500. This event was the first one of its kind staged in the Gulf. *AP*

SPORTS ON TV

COMPILED BY LORENZO MANGUIAT

BASKETBALL: US NCAA - Connecticut Huskies vs Syracuse Orangemen at 8 a.m. and Marquette Golden Eagles vs Cincinnati at 1 p.m. (r) on ESPN

Chinese National Basketball League, Semifinals at 3:30 p.m. (r) on Star Sports

NBA – San Antonio Spurs vs Minnesota Timberwolves at 5 p.m. (r) on ESPN

GOLF: PGA Buick Invitational, Day Two at 8 a.m. (r) on Star Sports

Golfglobe 2001 at 11:30 a.m. (r) on Star Sports

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

BAGUIO GOLF

Japanese keeps John Hay lead

By Roy Luarca

BAGUIO CITY—Tonokazu Yoshinaga stayed aloft with extremely difficult recoveries on the last two holes yesterday, but found himself besieged by a host of challengers, led by the charging Tony Lascuna, for the Camp John Hay Open crown.

The Japanese journeyman sent his 7-iron third shot sailing in-between two pine trees less than a meter apart for birdie on No. 17 and then drew loud applause with a 90-degree break approach putt that saved par on No. 18, giving him a one-over-par 69 and one-shot lead over Lascuna, who sizzled with a 61 that missed the CJH course record by one.

Counting his back-to-back 65, Yoshinaga of Kyushu island pooled a 199 to surpass Lascuna's 200 and Ramon Brobio's 69=201 after 54 holes of the P700,000 tournament.

A shootout for the P100,000 top purse, however, looms as eight others were within five shots off the pace going to today's final round.

MRT-Southwoods Open champion Rey Pagunsan carded a 64 to spearhead those at 202. In the same bunch were first day co-leader Richard Sinfuego (65), Lito Rempojo (66) former world junior titlist Carito Villaroman (67), Canadian Rick Gibson (68) and Noli Kempis (68).

Gibson's bid got stymied by a triple-bogey 7 on the killer fifth hole.

CAP-Seniors Challenge winner Mario Siodina stayed within range after a 66 that put him in the company of Danny de los Santos (66) and Roger Cabajar (67) at an even 204.

"Good recovery," said the 23-year-old Yoshinaga, who climbed from four-over at the frontside. "Maybe nervous at the start."

Brobio shunned a triple bogey 6 No. 4 to eagle the par 5 No. 16 from 11 feet and keep his distance from Yoshinoga.

"As Lascuna showed, anybody can shoot a 61 here," said Brobio. "That is if you can put the shots at the right spot and make the putts."

Lascuna actually started with a three-putt par from 30 feet, but found his touch to sink eight birdies, including three straight from No. 14. He missed the green on No. 10 for his lone bogey.

"I'll make a go for it early," said Lascuna, who started the day nine shots off the pace.

The Japan Tour-bound Yoshinaga finally three-putted yesterday as the fast greens of the up-and-down layout again tested the 32 survivors to the hilt.

The scores:

199—T. Yoshinaga (65-65-69)
200—T. Lascuna (72-67-61)
201—R. Brobio (66-66-69)
202—N. Kempis (68-66-68); R. Gibson (68-66-68); C. Villaroman (69-66-67); L. Rempojo (69-67-66); R. Sinfuego (65-72-65); R. Pagunsan (71-67-64)
204—R. Cabajar (67-70-67); M. Siodina (67-71-66); D. DL Santos (72-66-66)
205—B. Magada (71-68-66)

ACTRESS Isabel Granada (above) will be among the participants in the Nestea volleyball series.

Nestea beach volleyball series starts tomorrow

NESTEA Ice Tea, the most successful proponent of beach volleyball in the country, is unleashing the first installment of its biggest beach volleyball project in years—the Nestea Beach Volley Series—with the opening of the 5th Nestea Beach Volley University Challenge (formerly the Nestea Inter-Collegiate Beach Volleyball Tournament) at the Cultural Center of the Philippines from Feb. 21 to 25.

Over a hundred teams from nearly '50 colleges and universities will converge at the appointed beach volley arena in Manila to advance to the semifinals and the championship rounds that will be held in Boracay from April 21-22.

The Nestea Beach Volley Series, which makes up the sports component of the recently launched Nestea Loves the Beach project, will be comprised of two more beach volleyball meets—the 1st Nestea Beach Volley National Open (March 8-10) and the 2nd Nestea Asian Beach Volley Women's Championships (March 30-April 1).

The last has been officially declared through the auspices of Tony Liao, vice president of the Philippine Amateur Volleyball Association (Pava) and chair of Asian Beach Volleyball Council, as the first leg of the Asian Beach Volleyball Circuit.

The emerging champions of the University Challenge will eventually play to automatically gain spots in next year's edition of the Nestea Beach Volley National Open.

San Sebastian College's power duo of Sheryl Tumayao and Jennifer Buhawe returns this year to defend their title while last year's dark horse finishers Marvin Gotangogan and Gino Macailan will have to rely on their fellow Letran players to defend their school's champion trophy with their graduation from the college.

The Nestea Beach Volley University Challenge is made possible by sponsors Speedo, the official outfitter of the Nestea Beach Volley Series, Asian Spirit, the people's Airline, Mikasa, the Westen Philippine Plaza, Milo, Nescafe Frothe, Boracay Resorts Galaxy, Club 10, Titay's South Beach Resort, and Alyssa Resort, Boracay food sponsors, Caribo, Gorio's Café Breton and Floremar Pizzeria Da Mario Ristorante Italiano.

Durant rules Hope, sets PGA record

DURANT

LA QUINTA, California—By the time Joe Durant made back-to-back birdies to open the back nine, those chasing him had pretty much given up hope. Durant had just begun a chase of his own, though, straight into the PGA Tour record book.

Durant capped off a near flawless 65 on Sunday with birdies on two of the last three holes to win the Bob Hope Classic and set a record for the lowest score ever in a 90-hole tour event.

The tournament had long since been decided when Durant made the birdies to get to 36 under, breaking the mark of 35 under set here in 1993 by Tom Kite.

Durant faltered only on the final hole, leaving a 2.4-meter (8-foot) birdie putt short, but it was good enough for a four-shot win over Paul Stankowski, whose 63 was only good enough to make up two shots on the leader.

"It was really a magical week," Durant said. "It seemed like every time I needed to make a crucial putt I did."

It was the second scoring record in two days for Durant–who set a mark for most under par through four rounds at 29 under–and the third PGA Tour scoring record to be broken already this year.

It also was the second win as a pro for Durant, who didn't flinch after holding the lead going into the final round for the first time as a pro. Durant's lead was never in danger as he made seven birdies and no bogeys on the perfectly manicured PGA West Palmer course that yielded a final-round 59 to David Duval two years ago. *AP*

Mindanao Summit lauded

DAVAO CITY—Delegates in the First Mindanao Sports Summit which started yesterday were optimistic that a concrete plan of action will materialize in promoting the development of sports and physical fitness in the region.

"We have been waiting for this summit for a long time. It is a positive step in charting the direction of sports in Mindanao," Davao City Councilor Cornelia Reta, the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines regional president, said.

In his keynote speech, chair Carlos Tuason of the Philippine Sports Commission said "this summit links the sporting agenda of Mindanao to the overall thrusts of the national government under the administration of Her Excellency President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo."

"The summit has re-positioned the island of Mindanao as a reservoir of talents...We are sure there other Sulaimans, Jaitullas and Lerios there waiting to be discovered," he added.

Gracing the opening rites were Lanao del Norte Gov. Imelda Dimaporo, Davao City Mayor Benjamin de Guzman and PSC commissioners Richie Garcia, Amparo "Weena" Lim and William Ramirez, a native of Davao City. Local Governments Secretary Joey Lina was represented by Sandy Paredes, executive director of the Union of Local Government Authorities in the Philippines.

Iverson, Lynch key 76ers win over Suns

PHILADELPHIA—Allen Iverson scored 26 points and George Lynch added 15 points and 12 rebounds in the NBA Sunday to lead the Philadelphia 76ers over the Phoenix Suns, 104-98.

The Sixers have won four straight since the All-Star break, improving the NBA's best record to 40-14.

Jason Kidd had 22 points and 10 assists for Phoenix, which had won four of five.

Phoenix closed to 91-88 on a layup and free throw by Cliff Robinson with 4:40 left, but Aaron McKie nailed a 3-pointer and Iverson made one free throw then drilled a 3-pointer.

Spurs 92, Raptors 74

In Toronto, Tim Duncan had 20 points, 13 rebounds and five blocked shots as the Spurs took advantage of poor shooting by Vince Carter.

Carter had one of his worst games of the seasons, scoring six points on 3-for-12 shooting. Morris Peterson had a team-high 14 points for the Raptors.

Nets 102, Clippers 96, OT

In East Rutherford, New Jersey, Stephon Marbury scored 18 points in the second half and added six more in overtime as New Jersey overcame a 20-point deficit.

Marbury finished with 33 points, helping the Nets stop a two-game losing streak that sent the Clippers to their fifth straight loss.

Meanwhile, after six weeks of treatment, Don Nelson says he is free of prostate cancer and ready to resume coaching the Dallas Mavericks.

"It is time for me to come back, time for me to take hold of this team and coach them into the playoffs," Nelson said Sunday. "I expect that is what I am going to do."

Complete results: San Antonio 92, Toronto 74; Philadelphia 104, Phoenix 98; New Jersey 102, L.A. Clippers 96, OT; Utah 94, Sacramento 90; Vancouver 110, Minnesota 102; Indiana 110, L.A. Lakers 109; Orlando 96, New York 88; Washington 101, Denver 98; Atlanta 98, Golden State 91. *AP*

POC to direct training of cagers, cyclists

By June Navarro

THE PHILIPPINE Olympic Committee has formed a supervisory body tasked to oversee the training of athletes in basketball and cycling for the Southeast Asian Games as the national sports associations remain in a state of quandary after being plagued by internal problems.

With barely seven months left before the Kuala Lumpur meet, POC president Celso Dayrit said the Olympic body is temporarily taking over the affairs of the Basketball Association of the Philippines and Philippine Amateur Cycling Association until after their respective rifts are settled.

Dayrit tapped the services of rowing's Nestor Ilagan and swimming's Ral Rosario, both chair of the POC Coaches and Athletes Commission, in facilitating the training of the athletes and coaches for the biennial meet.

Rosario, who also sits as secretary general of the Philippine Amateur Swimming Association, will monitor the athletes while Ilagan handles the coaches.

"In view of the current situation that is affecting some NSAs, I've directed a committee which will manage and supervise the training of the athletes in preparation for this year's SEA Games," said Dayrit.

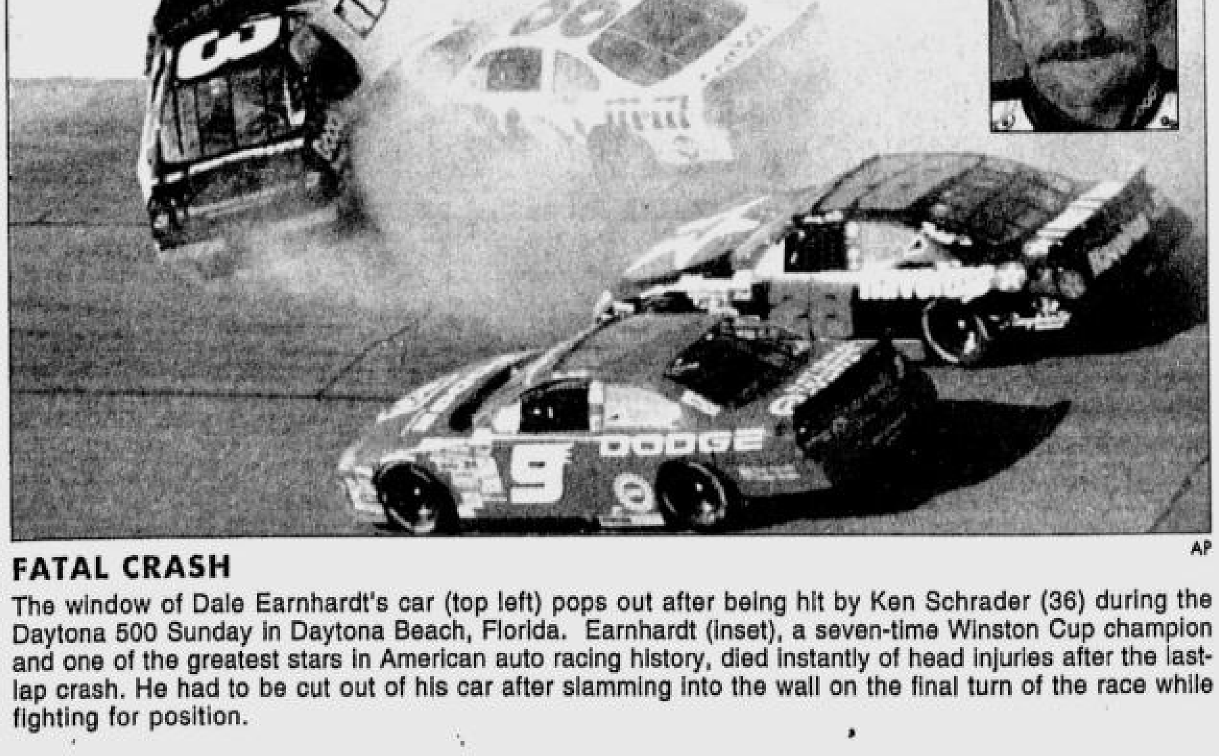
Freddie Jalasco, POC-recognized BAP head, is amenable to the idea but only up to a certain extent.

"If it only concerns the handling of the team's tune-up games and practice, I see nothing wrong with that," said Jalasco, the SEA Games chief of mission.

Meanwhile, the Olympic Solidarity Movement of the International Olympic Committee made good its promise of giving the POC a share of the profit it earned in the Sydney Olympics.

Dayrit, with some POC officials, turned over sports equipment worth P1 million to the Philippine Center for Sports Medicine courtesy of the Olympic Solidarity Movement.

Three stationary bikes, two tread mills and 18 heart rate monitors were donated by the POC in a simple turnover rites at the PCSM.



AP

FATAL CRASH

The window of Dale Earnhardt's car (top left) pops out after being hit by Ken Schrader (36) during the Daytona 500 Sunday in Daytona Beach, Florida. Earnhardt (inset), a seven-time Winston Cup champion and one of the greatest stars in American auto racing history, died instantly of head injuries after the last-lap crash. He had to be cut out of his car after slamming into the wall on the final turn of the race while fighting for position.

Marathon listing on

DEADLINE for registration in the 42K main event of the Pasig River Heritage Marathon has been extended until Friday, Feb. 23.

The marathon supported by Fort Bonifacio Development Corporation, Metro-Manila Development Authority, Department of Public Works and Highways, Unilever, Jollibee, San Miguel Corporation, New Balance, Republic Asahi Glass Corporation, Integrated Waste Management Inc. and React Communications Group will fire off at 5 a.m. on Sunday, Feb. 25 on A. Soriano Street (formerly Aduana Street) in front of Manila Cathedral.

At stake in the race is a fat purse of P75,000 and P50,000 for the male and female champions, respectively. The other top 10 runners in both divisions will, likewise, receive cash prizes and glass trophies.

The entry fee of P250 entitles each participant to an event T-shirt, runner's cap and race packet. The top 100 finishers of this long-distance footrace will receive a running singlet each while the rest of the field will get a Certificate of Finish.

SJ kegfest

CHAIR Philip Ella Juico of San Juan Bowling Association is inviting all bowlers to join the SJBA Invitational Handicap League to be played every Wednesday night at the Greenlanes Center in Greenhills.

Interested bowlers from SJBA and other associations may go to Greenlanes on Wednesday, Feb. 21 to register at 8:30 p.m. or they may contact Gary Abaca at tel. no. 715-6842. Competition will start at 9 p.m.

6-cock derby tonight

TOP cockfighting action returns at Mandaluyong Coliseum as big-time cockers collide in the "BL BG Showdown 6-Cock Derby" beginning at 6 tonight with 52 fights lined up. Sponsors are Sagupaan Super Feeds and Lakpue Drug Inc.

Derby hosts Boy "Lechon" de Roca of Batangas, Danny Ty of Manila and Boy Garcia of Negros have joined hands to assemble a tough cast of well-known big-time cockers.

Heading the cast are Ucap stalwarts Danding Cojuangco, Pete Rodriguez, Butch Macasaet, Joey delos Santos, Patrick Antonio, Biboy Enriquez, Mauro Prieto, Raymond Velayo, Mario Villamor, Pepito Ngo, Tony Tan, Engr. Sonny Lagon, lawyer Ram Lopez, Vic Yu, Boyboy Roa, Mayor Claudy Bautista, Tony Litonjua, Jet Fernando, Ramon Mencenares, Ting Ariosa, Tito Reyes, Esting Teopaco, Capt. Ben Rodriguez, Blandy Tolentino, Pol Estrellado, Alex Tang and Wakee Salud.

'Karambola'

EIGHTY new entries join the fray today as the Super Karambola rages on at Roligon with the second day of eliminations starting at 5 p.m.

Sharon Cuneta's brother Chet Cuneta, Dong Lacson, Arnold Mendoza, Jimmy de los Santos, Baby Canillas and engineer Meder Datu lead tonight's competitors. Hosted by Rolando S. Luzong of Marikina, the derby stakes a guaranteed cash prize of P1 million for a low entry fee of P5,500 and a mininum bet of only P2,200.

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METRO
LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

1.5 million squatters in danger of eviction

BY ANDREA TRINIDAD-ECHAVEZ

PUBLIC Works Secretary Simeon Datumanong has been accused of pushing for the revocation of President Macapagal-Arroyo's order suspending the demolition of urban poor communities, a move that could displace some 1.5 million squatters.

The Urban Poor Associates (UPA) yesterday lambasted Datumanong for persuading the President to reconsider her position against demolitions as contained in a memorandum Datumanong reportedly wrote just a few days after becoming the top official of the Department of Public Works and Highways.

The UPA, which represented urban poor residents in Metro Manila, obtained a copy of the memorandum where Datumanong cited the need to lift the moratorium on demolitions "to expedite the implementation of the C5, R10 roads, Pasig River Rehabilitation Project (PRRP), the

1.5 MILLION/ A18

Erap makes Jinggoy quit candidacy

ESTRADA

SAN Juan Mayor Jinggoy Estrada is taking a break from politics and giving way to Ronaldo Zamora, his father's former executive secretary, in the municipality's congressional race.

The move was seen as an effort of the Estrada camp to secure a stronger sphere of influence in Congress, Zamora being a veteran power broker compared to Jinggoy who still has a relatively limited exposure in national politics.

ERAP MAKES/ A18

CHEERS

Hinulugang Taktak now protected

HINULUGANG Taktak,an environmentally threatened waterfalls in Antipolo City, is now a protected area. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources said that Presidential Proclamation No. 412 placed the scenic spot under the country's protected areas system. The City of Antipolo's control of the area was handed over to the DENR when Congress changed its status from a recreational facility into a national park in 1990. Proclamation No. 42 placed the area under the National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 1992 and renamed the Hinulugang Taktak as the Hinulugang Taktak Protected Landscape. It also expanded the park's coverage area from 0.89 hectares to 3.20 hectares to better implement rehabilitation and protection measures against encroachment and illegal occupancy inside the park.

Cynthia Balana

SHE SAYS

Sen. LOREN LEGARDA on garbage law execution:

LEGARDA

"WE CANNOT understand why it would take 12 months for the DENR to simply come up with the draft implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of the Solid Waste Management Act. Any delay in the promulgation of the IRR would defeat the urgent intent of the law, which is to set standards for waste management and provide guidelines for volume reduction through recycling, reuse, recovery and composting before collection, treatment and disposal in appropriate dump sites. Metro Manila alone now produces some 6,000 tons of garbage daily, with 25 percent of it illegally dumped on vacant lots, waterways or on the street. This has exacerbated not only flooding, but also the poor health conditions now prevailing in many communities."

Wazzzzup?

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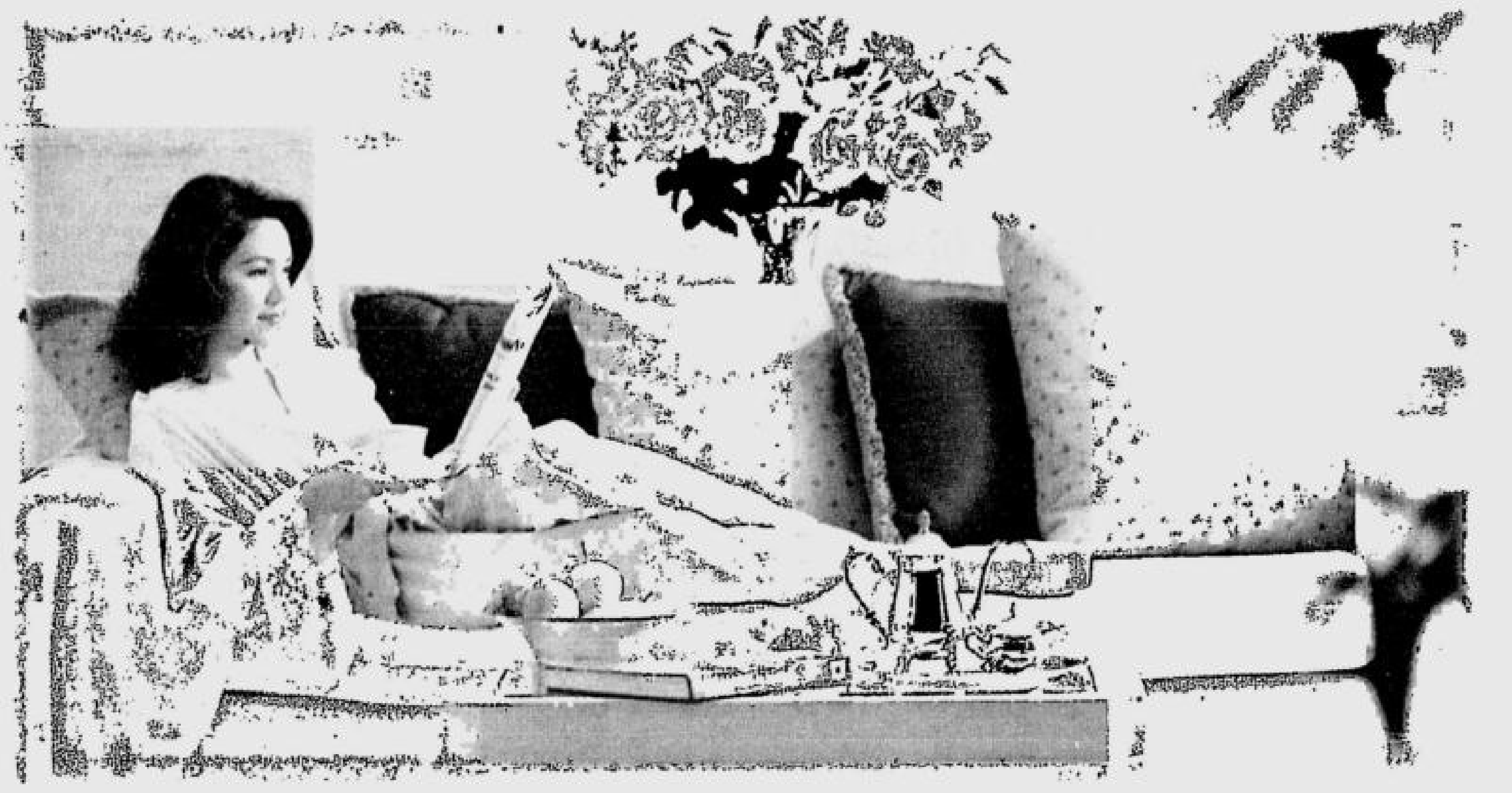

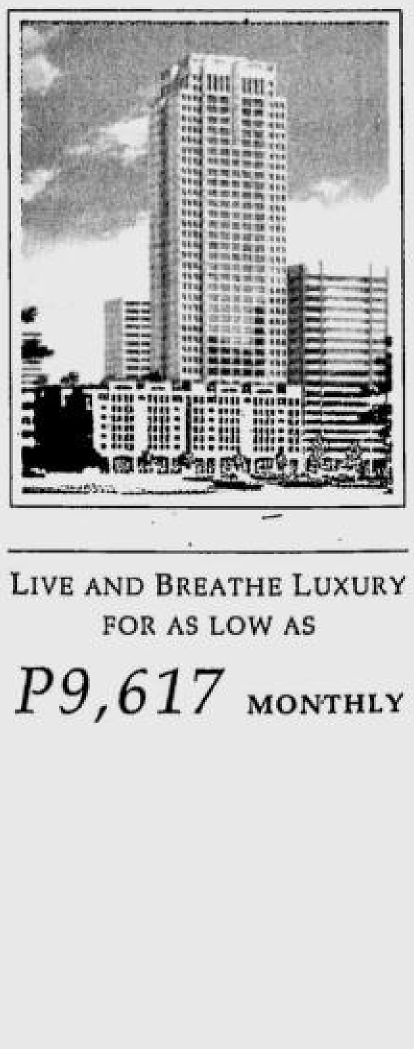

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Life for man who killed wife in fit of jealousy

By Christian V. Esguerra

A CALOOCAN regional trial court yesterday sentenced to life imprisonment Jesus Aquino for stabbing dead his common-law wife who cheated on him in 1999.

Judge Bayani Rivera convicted Aquino, 28, of Libis Talisay, Caloocan, for killing live-in partner Filipina de Leon, 24, whom he suspected of having an affair with his friend.

Rivera also ordered Aquino to pay the victim's family P289,720 in damages.

Aquino could have received a death verdict had he not voluntarily surrendered to authorities, Rivera said in his eight-page decision.

Court records showed Aquino killed De Leon at about 8:30 p.m. on Nov. 13, 1999 after he saw his wife inside the house of his friend in Libis Talisay.

Aquino suspected his wife was having an affair with his friend so he sent his daughter by another woman to fetch de Leon, according to court records.

When Aquino confronted De Leon, she reportedly refused to explain why she went to their neighbor's house. This prompted Aquino to slap her repeatedly.

The woman allegedly got a fan knife and the couple began to wrestle for the weapon. Aquino got hold of the knife and stabbed de Leon 11 times, court records showed.

Aquino fled and spent the night at the Sangandaan Cemetery. He surrendered to barangay officials the following day.

Lopez says he's sure to make it

FORMER Manila Mayor Mel Lopez yesterday expressed confidence the executive committee deliberating on the official mayoral candidate will support his bid to become the People's Power Coalition bet in the capital city because only he can meet the selection criteria of loyalty, integrity and winnability.

Lopez, chair of the Lakas NUCD-UMDP in Manila since 1992 and head of the local chapter of the coalition, said that in selecting the mayoral bet for Manila the committee will consider his track record.

He said Dondon Bagatsing, he other contender, is an outsider and a known loyal supporter of ousted President Joseph Estrada.

In a position letter submitted by Lopez and the local coalition to Sen. Renato Cayetano, chair of the administration party in the national capital region, the then United Opposition Group in Manila, pointed out that the other interested mayoral aspirant was actually the losing official candidate in 1998 of Estrada's Partido LAMMP coalition.

They also pointed out that soon after the appointment of former Mayor Alfredo Lim as interior and local government secretary, Bagatsing also aligned with the former hoping to be adopted as official congressional candidate for the fifth district.

Illegal terminals draw Abalos ire

Metropolitan Manila Development Authority chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. yesterday ordered barangay captains to revoke the permits they have issued to operators of illegal terminals, or risk facing administrative sanctions.

Abalos expressed dismay that the permits have made it harder for the MMDA-Traffic Operations Center to get rid of illegal terminals in various roads in Metro Manila, particularly those in Baclaran.

He blamed the proliferation of illegal PUV terminals in Baclaran for the heavy traffic in the area, as much of the road space which were being used for the loading and unloading of passengers.

"One cannot just issue a permit allowing main roads to be used as terminals. This practice is against the law and it must be stopped," Abalos maintained.

Artemia Rebong, 77

ARTEMIA M. Rebong died on Feb. 18 at the age of 77.

Her beloved children Ruth, Junior, Teddy, Edgar, Elmer, Daisy, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for her soul.

Her remains lie at the family residence on I. Fernando Street, Malanday, Valenzuela City.

She will be cremated today at the Eternal Gardens Memorial Park in Balintawak, Quezon City. Interment will follow at the Valenzuela Memorial Park in Viente Reales, Valenzuela City.

WIDE-SCALE STOCK FRAUD

14 foreigners charged

By Dave Veridiano and Rocky Nazareno

POLICE yesterday filed charges of wide-scale fraud and economic sabotage against 14 foreigners who were arrested in their Makati City office on Feb. 16 for their alleged involvement in a multimillion-dollar international stock investment scam.

The Philippine National Police's Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) also charged the 14 suspects from Britain, Canada, Italy and the Czech Republic, for working in the country without permits.

Charged before the Department of Justice (DOJ) were Derek Richard Warner, Kevin Peter Turpin, Jonathan Herbert Dodson, Geoffrey Missenden, Christopher Copeland, Grayson Scott Buckley, James Steven Fallon, Bruce Darcy Gabor Kaposy, Matthew Carter, Hannah Sutherland and Dionne Paulette McLarty, all from Britain.

Also charged were former Italian policeman Massimo Proveza, Canadian Martin Patrick Totton and Helena Ciskova of the Czech Republic.

Chief Supt. Nestorio Gualberto, CIDG director, accused the 14 foreigners of using the Philippines as a base to fraudulently sell hundreds of thousands of dollars in nonexistent stocks abroad via a telemarketing operation.

Police claimed the 14 are employees of Mendez Prior Europe, which holds office at the second and fourth floors of Montepino building on Gamboa and Adelantado streets, Salcedo Village, Makati City.

Mendez Prior is suspected to be one of several illegal brokerage firms established in Southeast Asia just before the region was hit by the financial crisis in 1998.

Police claimed Mendez Prior Europe had victimized at least 87 investors, mostly Europeans and South Africans, through fraudulent stocks transactions.

One victim, a South African furniture manufacturer, allegedly bought $135,000 in stocks from the company in 1999 and found out only this month that the shares did not exist, police said.

South African businessman Pietro Lioni, represented by United States-based lawyer Matthew McEvily, positively identified last Sunday, suspect Dionne Paullete McLarty, as the manager of Mendez Prior Europe.

McEvily said McLarty introduced herself to his client as Diana Davis, and she convinced Lioni to invest on high-yield investments in international markets.

During interrogation, the suspects denied involvement with Mendez Prior Europe and claimed they were simply applying for jobs.

They said they learned of Mendez Prior Europe through newspaper advertisements and on the Internet, promising jobs that would pay from $75,000 to $100,000 within six months.

With a report from AP

Did female cop shoot herself?

By Philip C. Tubeza

POLICE are determining if the death of PO2 Desiree D. Peñalosa on Sunday night at a Quezon City restaurant was accidental or not.

Peñalosa, 32, a Presidential Anti-Organized Task force agent, was found dead on Sunday from a bullet wound inside the ladies room of Dencio's Grill and Restaurant in Quezon City.

But her companions denied there was foul play in her death and yesterday gave their sworn statements to investigators of the Central Police District (CPD), said Senior Insp. Rudy Jaraza, CPD-Criminal Investigation Unit-homicide division chief.

Peñalosa's companions Insp. Michael Co of the Philippine National Police (PNP) Crime Laboratory in Camp Crame, Senior Supt. Omar Quirubin of the PNP Maritime Command, businessman Guilmar Vidanes, and retired US Navy member Manuel Sanchez also took paraffin tests to determine if any of them fired the gun that killed Peñalosa, Jaraza added.

They told police that they were eating at the restaurant about 9:30 p.m. on Sunday celebrating the planned baptism of Peñalosa's child today. Quirubin left earlier, but returned about 15 minutes before Peñalosa was found dead, said Chief Insp. Roger Yalung.

While the group was eating and drinking beer, Peñalosa excused herself to go to the ladies room, police said. One of her companions even got up to show her the way to the toilet since Peñalosa was walking toward the restaurant entrance, police said.

Minutes after Peñalosa left the group, headwaiter Mike Brosas said he heard a shot coming from the ladies room and went to check. He then saw Peñalosa lying on the floor.

Chief Insp. Yalung said Peñalosa was found shot in the right side of the body. Her 9mm. service firearm was also found beneath one of the wash basins in the ladies room, Yalung said.

Police also found an empty shell at the scene.

Yalung said that there was no other person inside the ladies room when Peñalosa entered it. He said there was also no window, which could have been used to break into the ladies room.

Peñalosa's companions brought her to the Chinese General Hospital where she was declared dead on arrival about 11:15 p.m.

They told police they were confused after the shooting that they brought Peñalosa to Chinese General Hospital in Blumentrit, Manila even though there were other hospitals nearer the restaurant.

Peñalosa's sister PO3 Charlotte Peñalosa of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) has asked the National Bureau of Investigation to conduct an autopsy on her sibling.

Yalung said initial findings showed the shooting was accidental.

"She must have tucked the gun at her side and it accidentally fired," Yalung said.

But he said police are still waiting for results of the autopsy and the paraffin tests on Peñalosa's companions to determine if there was foul play in her death.

Case investigator SPO4 Resty De Leon also dismissed the possibility that Peñalosa's death was suicide. He said suicide victims shoot themselves in the head and not on the side of their bodies.

ROGER MARGALLO

ARMED TEDDY BEAR
An innocent looking teddy bear was yesterday found stuffed with a .22 pistol at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport during X-ray examination at the airport's pre-departure area. One of the children of Lourdes Woolbridge, 37, was carrying the toy. Woolbridge and her children were bound for New Zealand on a Singapore Airlines flight. She claimed a stranger gave the toy to her child on Valentine's Day.

Navy chief in hot water

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THE tiff of Navy flag officer in command, Rear Adm. Guillermo Wong, with the Marine Corps has become serious.

The situation has become so bad that the Marines are calling for no less than the ouster of their big boss. Otherwise, the local "leathernecks" say, the government "might as well abolish the Corps."

"We will no longer obey orders from the FOIC (*that's what Navy and Marines call their chief—RT*) because he doesn't respect us. Respect is a two-way street," said a young Marine officer.

* * *

The Armed Forces chief of staff, Gen. Angelo Reyes, was scheduled to have a breakfast meeting with top Marine officers to sort things out with the military's "fightingest" men.

I was told the military top honcho called the Navy's big boss to Camp Aguinaldo to get his side on the controversy.

This is the first time in the history of the Marines, the most disciplined soldiers in the AFP, that they're up in arms against the highest-ranking officer in the Navy hierarchy.

* * *

The Marines, considered the Navy's "illegitimate children" because they're land-based, are the proudest of the Navy brood. To the Marines, the Navy chief is their father. The eldest son is the Marine commandant.

Marines are so proud of their unit that they don't complain even if they're given impossible missions. They're the first to set foot on enemy territory and the last to leave. The Marines pave the way for the infantry.

That's why the quarrel of the usually uncomplaining Marines with their "father" comes as a surprise to other soldiers in the Armed Forces.

* * *

Wong started the quarrel last Thursday when he badmouthed Marine officers in front of the rank and file members. He called top Marine officers thieves.

Wong got a dressing down from the Marine officers, a no-no in the military, when it was his time to meet them at the conference room of the Marine headquarters.

Some of the officers, my sources said, even threatened to shoot Wong.

* * *

Wong, a member of Philippine Military Academy Class 1969, is considered among the most honest officers in the military.

But his major defect is his acid tongue, according to his colleagues.

Wong's fights as an officer and as a PMA cadet were due to insults he hurled against his colleagues. When he was a senior cadet, two plebes (junior cadets) beat him up because he insulted them. A colleague shot Wong when he was a junior officer also because he insulted him. Wong's insults are allegedly personal.

* * *

But it seems it's not only the Marines who have a beef against Wong. Subordinate naval officers have come out to denounce the Navy chief for his allegedly cavalier attitude toward them.

For example, Navy Capt. Antonieto Ferrer complains that he was relieved by Wong as commander of the Naval Forces South (NFS) based in Zamboanga City for no apparent reason.

Ferrer is a graduate of the government-owned Philippine Merchant Marine Academy, another source of Navy officers. He holds a master of defense studies from the University of New South Wales. He is an honor graduate of the AFP Command and General Staff College. He is also an MBA undergraduate from the Ateneo de Manila University.

Ferrer, whom Wong replaced with a much junior officer, thinks Wong relieved him at the NFS because he is not a PMA graduate.

* * *

A manifesto signed by senior Navy officers says Wong is "vindictive, autocratic, disregards seniority policy, is distrustful of subordinates" in dealing with his subordinates.

They are also calling for his relief as Navy chief.

The National ROTC Alumni Association (Naraa), composed of reserve officers in the Armed Forces, has also joined the fray. Naraa members denounce Wong for the arbitrary relief of Capt. Amado Sanglay as commander of the Philippine Fleet, the biggest unit in the Navy.

The Naraa resolution was signed by retired Lt. Gen. William K. Hotchkiss, former Air Force chief, as national chair of the organization.

Wong has given President Macapagal, the military's commander in chief, a very big headache.

* * *

SPO4 Cesar Teneros of the Manila City Hall detachment should not be allowed to remain in the service a minute longer as soon as the investigation of his misconduct is finished.

Teneros beat up husband -and -wife-passengers of a taxi and the cab driver for a very stupid reason: he resented the three helping another taxi passenger who was injured in a road accident. The three Good Samaritans got down from their cab and helped the victim.

Teneros beat them up and jailed them for being Good Samaritans.

My gad! Since when has it become a sin or a crime to help your neighbor? Teneros must be a son of Satan.

No thanks to dancing mom, lawyer in for rough sailing

By Christian V. Esguerra

LAWYER Rissa Oreta, the daughter of Sen. Tessie Aquino-Oreta, has yet to file her certificate of candidacy as she is set to run for Congress in the coming May elections.

But incumbent Malabon-Navotas Rep. Ricky Sandoval has already imputed dark motives to her seeking public post.

Yesterday, the lawmaker claimed Oreta would be running for Congress to revive suspected shady deals her mother was said to have entered into during her term as representative from 1987 to 1992.

Sandoval, a member of "Spice Boys" of the Lower House, is gunning for a second straight term and has warned the public that the young Oreta would only use her position to corner government contracts if she wins in the elections.

But the Oretas are said to be still choosing between the senator's daughter and her uncle Tito whom to pit against Sandoval in the congressional race.

When contacted yesterday by the Inquirer, the young Oreta declined to comment on Sandoval's accusations. She said her lawyers had advised her not to issue any statement until she files her certificate of candidacy next week.

Sandoval pointed out that the young Oreta would have a conflict of interest should she win. He said she might "maneuver" government contracts, particularly the multimillion megaflood project, in favor of her family's construction firm A.M. Oreta the way her mother allegedly did during her incumbency.

Sen. Oreta came under fire last year after a lawyer complained that the P757-million irrigation project bagged by A.M. Oreta was allegedly unconstitutional and void.

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION
MAGALLANES DRIVE, INTRAMUROS
1002 MANILA

RE: DENIED VISA APPLICATIONS
x--x

ORDER No. ADD-01-001

For the period from July 1, 1998 up to January 31, 2001, the Bureau of Immigration (BI) denied 974 applications for different types of visa, the list of which is with the office of Atty. Ronaldo P. Ledesma, Executive Chairman, Board of Special Inquiry. Concerned foreigners/applicants are directed to take appropriate actions to maintain their lawful immigration status within fifteen (15) days from date of last publication. Failure to do so, the BI shall initiate deportation proceedings against them.

Publish this ORDER in three (3) newspapers of general circulation once (1) a week for four (4) consecutive weeks.

SO ORDERED.
12 February 2001

(Sgd.) ANDREA D. DOMINGO
Commissioner

February 20, 28, March 5 & 12, 2001 – Inquirer

1.5 million squatters . . .

(From page A17)

National Government Center (NGC) and flood control projects."

Datumanong also cited that delays of DPWH projects "have been causing a big drain on government's financial resources in view of increased project costs especially in terms of commitment fees on undrawn balance of foreign loans and price escalation."

Ted Añana, assistant coordinator of UPA, said about 1.5 million people, mostly children, would be evicted as a result of the implementation of DPWH projects.

"The temporary stoppage of demolitions is direly needed to find better housing solutions for the affected residents since government resettlement projects are not livable," Añana said.

According to an attachment of Datumanong's letter, urban poor settlers residing along R10 and the flood control projects would be relocated to Bitungol, Norzagaray, Bulacan.

But the UPA pointed out that the DPWH had not met all the requirements for relocation as mandated under RA 7279 or the Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA).

Añana said the DPWH had already displaced thousands of people in violent demolitions and were relocated in poorly developed sites.

The UPA said even former HUCC head Karina David had admitted, "Bitungol is not fit for human habitation."

The urban poor group also pointed out that people who were relocated there had already returned to Metro Manila.

"It is more costly for government to remove people from the cities and transfer them to distant and inadequate resettlement areas," Añana said.

He added that government is also wasting its funds for relocation because housing authorities have been constructing homes using substandard materials while neglecting to provide basic services in the area.

"DPWH is even guilty of throwing infrastructure project funds to the garbage bin because the resettlement sites do not meet international resettlement guidelines," Añana said.

One of the international fund donors of DPWH is the Japanese Banks for International Cooperation (JBIC) which is funding the flood control projects.

Añana said President Macapagal should turn down Datumanong's request and pursue what she has committed to the urban poor during her first public consultation with them at the National Government Center in Quezon City.

Erap makes . . .

(From page A17)

A source privy to the Estradas' political game plan yesterday disclosed that the former President persuaded Jinggoy last Saturday to yield to Zamora in the contest for the lone House seat for San Juan.

Zamora, who was the town's congressman during the Ramos administration, is expected to use his experience and long-standing alliances in the legislature to lead pro-Estrada causes in the House should he make a successful comeback.

It could not however be immediately determined which party Zamora would run under, the Nationalist People's Coalition of Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco or Erap Estrada's original party Partido ng Masang Pilipino.

When Mr. Estrada was still in power, Zamora was in fact being groomed as a sure bet for the House speakership in what would become the country's 12th Congress.

Jinggoy's political career, meanwhile, could come to a halt, perhaps temporarily, since he has already served three consecutive terms as mayor, the allowed length of service for elected local officials.

His half-brother, JV Ejercito, had earlier announced intentions to run for San Juan mayor and succeed Jinggoy.

Volt Contreras

American and Filipino actors featured in 'Vital Parts'

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

WE made it a point to see "Vital Parts" last week because, despite the fact that its leads and writer-director are American, most of the other people involved in the production are Filipinos, and the majority of its scenes were shot in the Philippines.

If memory serves, the film started out as a co-production of Premiere Entertainment and its American counterparts, but it's now being shown locally as a Viva Films release.

In any case, the movie is of interest because it's the first part-Filipino production to be based on a book by **Harold Robbins**. It's also a good opportunity to see how the Filipino talents in it do in their scenes with American actors like **Richard Grieco** and **Athena Massey**.

But first, notes on the film itself: Grieco plays a US Navy man who is lured by his best friend to get involved in a drug deal. Alas, he doesn't know that his so-called friend and his wife (Massey) were out to kill him all along, so they could enjoy the profits from the drug deal together.

But Grieco survives the murder attempt, is hauled to court for his complicity in the drug deal, and spends years in a Hong Kong prison.

Upon his release, he sets out to exact vengeance on his former friend, who is now with a syndicate that deals in the profitable albeit illicit commerce of human body parts for organ transplant operations.

Along the way, Grieco is helped by a sexy prostitute (**Joyce Jimenez**), but she ends up a victim of the organ "harvesters'" ghoulish trade.

In the end, of course, Grieco is able to get back at the film's villain and exposes his inhumane racket, despite the many goons and other impossible odds arrayed against him.

The movie's scenes move fluidly between Manila, Subic, Corregidor, Hong Kong and California, but many of the production's sequences are shot in too dark and grainy a manner.

But the film's biggest flaw is its hero's and villain's seeming lack of seriousness about their fight to the death.

For instance, just as Grieco has the villain trapped in his lair and fires at him at close quarters, he misses. And, when Grieco "invades" the huge building complex that the syndicate is constructing, the villain doesn't sic his goons on the interloper until it's too late.

Also implausible is the decision to make the final pay-off in Corregidor Island's Malinta Tunnel. And the fact that there isn't a single guard around to even try to stop the carnage that ensues.

It's elements like these that prevent us from empathizing with most of the characters and plot developments in this movie, despite its creditable production values. Sure, it's "only" an action caper, but some movies of this type have been able to inject greater believability and logic in their proceedings.

Now, about the Filipino talents in this production:

Joyce Jimenez's character is mainly there for the movie's sexy scenes, but she does add a certain pathos to the story due to the naïve way that she approaches her character. She speaks English too well for her role as a bar girl, though.

Noni Buencamino has only a short scene as a Hong Kong detective, but manages to come up with a textured character. Ditto for **Jose Mari Avellana** as a Chinese military officer.

Other supporting or cameo parts are filled by **Teresa Loyzaga**, **Jimmy Fabregas**, **Bart Guingona**, **Bob Soler** and **Rustica Carpio**. And of course, many of the goons in the production are played by Filipino character actors and stuntmen. In addition, some starlets are cast as topless dancers in the movie's bar scenes.

How do they do? They come up with standard and even perfunctory performances. But that isn't such a big loss, since the American actors themselves don't do much better!

Feedback

FROM **Bryan Gutierrez** of Pasay City: "As you described in a recent article, the questions on the 'Who Wants to Be A Millionaire' game show are so wide-ranging that it is impossible for anyone to answer them all correctly.

"But I think there's one more detail that the show's organizers have never fully explained: Are the questions selected one by one as the show progresses, or are all 15 questions selected before the first question is asked?

"From what I've seen, the organizers do select the questions one by one for each contestant. In one segment, a contestant cried as he explained to **Christopher de Leon** that he would use his winnings to finance the eye surgery of his family's maid. Guess what the question was after that heart-rending moment: 'What kind of doctor specializes in eye diseases?' Was that a coincidence?

"Selecting questions one by one for each contestant is unfair. The organizers could manipulate the outcome of the game. Is the contestant too cocky? Ask him about a character in an 18th century Russian book. Is he pitiable? Ask him the Tagalog word for lettuce.

"All 15 questions should be picked before the first question is even asked. Preferably, this sequence of 15 questions should be presented to a DTI representative who can verify the questions asked by De Leon. That way, each contestant will have a fair chance of winning the top prize of one million pesos . . ."

Quote, unquote

INGRID Bergman: Happiness lies in good health and a bad memory.

George Bernard Shaw: The only way to avoid being miserable is not to have enough leisure to wonder whether you are happy or not.

John M. Good: Happiness consists in activity. Such is the constitution of our nature: it is a running stream, not a stagnant pool.

New concert producers deliver casting coup

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Leah Salterio

IF YOU think only veteran concert producers can come up with the casting coup of **Pops Fernandez** and Side A in one show, think again.

Youth power is behind "What You See is What You Get," to be staged Feb. 24 at Folk Arts Theater. And the producers are true tyros.

8 Designs and Marketing Group is making the dream concert possible. The eight young, determined and hardworking people behind the outfit had long wanted to cast Pops and the quintet of **Joey Generoso, Naldy Gonzales, Joey Benin, Ernie Severino** and **Kelly Badon** in one show. However, the tight schedule of the artists prevented the young producers from signing them up for a concert date.

Still, the group did not lose hope and pursued their dream cast.

The strength of 8 Designs and Marketing Group lies in the diversified experiences of its members, brought together by their common passion for live concerts.

The group is composed of experts in advertising, marketing, sales, events management, public relations, merchandising and publishing. No wonder when they thought of producing a concert, all aspects of production were readily covered.

But despite the big event they are mounting, the young group wants to keep a low profile. They'd rather hype the concert than promote themselves.

"What You See is What You Get" is the first major concert of both Pops and Side A this year. In December, Pops staged a successful birthday concert as a gift to her fans. Side A also did a successful concert tour of the United States and Canada.

Joining them in the Folk Arts Theater show are The Manoeuvres, Hotlegs Dancers and The Opera.

FIRST TIME together: Pops Fernandez and the Side A Band.

Via's flesh

WHEN you say the name **Via Veloso**, expect a display of flesh on the big screen. Flesh on display is what you'll get in her latest movie, "Bala Ko . . . Bahala sa 'Yo," where she plays leading lady to **Jeric Raval.**

Via apparently has no qualms about baring flesh. "The movie calls for a number of sex scenes which can even shock some moviegoers," Via grants. "But the scenes are important to the plot.

"I've done a lot of other movies with sex scenes, but in this one, my director (**Pong Mercado**) made sure the sex scenes were pertinent to the development of the plot."

VELOSO

No to drugs, yes to sports

OVER the weekend, we received a text message from **Richard Gomez,** who has been doing his share in promoting the MAD (Mamamayan Ayaw sa Droga) party list for the coming elections.

The message said: "Save the children, get MAD. Vote MAD party list—Mamamayan Ayaw sa Droga! Please pass."

Indeed, Richard has long been an advocate of the "Say no to drugs" movement. And with his involvement in MAD as its chair, the actor is taking the cause a step farther by supporting the MAD party list for Congress.

With MAD, Richard strongly advocates the need to get today's youth hooked not on vices but on something more worthwhile, such as sports, to make them better persons and eventually build them as leaders of the future.

Known as an all-around athlete who excels in rowing, golf, fencing, karting,basketball and swimming, Richard is perhaps proudest about the Goma Cup Celebrity Golf Tournament, among his many sports activities.

Starting tomorrow, the actor takes to the greens anew in the much-awaited 11th Smart Zed Goma Cup, until Feb. 23 at the breathtaking Fairways and Bluewaters in Boracay.

The Goma Cup is a brainchild of Richard that has enjoyed more than a decade of success as being the only celebrity golf tournament in the country. His Hartebeest Entertainment is also at the helm of the games which also enjoys TV airing on ABS-CBN. Of course, Hartebeest's superwoman, **Marilen Nuñez**, oversees the nitty-gritty details of the event.

Richard has taken the annual Goma Cup all over the country, including Puerto Azul in Cavite and Camp John Hay in Baguio. And each year, he never fails to gather his show biz colleagues to play golf.

This year's tournament promises to be more fun and exciting with a lively line up of activities for all celebrity participants.

Celebrity stars invited to tee off include include the Yllana brothers **Anjo, Jomari** and **Paul**; GMA-7 TV host **Lyn Ching**; singer-comedian **Ogie Alcasid**; action stars **Raymart Santiago** and **Monsour del Rosario**; actress **Maritoni Fernandez**; actors **Patrick Guzman** and **Shintaro Valdez**; and balladeer **Ariel Rivera** and wife **Gelli de Belen**.

Singers **Hajji Alejandro** and **Leah Navarro** are also in the list, as well as comedians **Gary Lising** and **Noel Trinidad**, musicians **Jong Cuenco** and **John Lesaca**, actor **Robin Da Roza**, young actress **LJ Moreno**, stage and TV director **Al Quinn**, stars **Jackie Manzano, Ian Veneracion** and **Jake Roxas.**

Richard's wife, **Lucy Torres,** although a non-playing participant, will give her all-out support to her hubby's "baby." The couple's real baby, **Julianna Marie**, will also make her first trip to Boracay with her parents.

A welcome dinner tonight awaits all participants and guests. The whole day tomorrow, Feb. 21, is devoted to practice games and also for the Ericsson skills game and the Nivea sun beach volleyball.

Tournament proper will be Feb. 22 and 23, with the awards party slated right after the end of the match.

Professional golf players will meet with the stars in the two-day battle of skills in the greens. At stake for the pros is P1 million in cash, the biggest pot money in any golfing meet in the country.

Touted as the longest-running invitational golf tournament in the country, Goma Cup was conceived when Richard was still a mass communications student majoring in filmmaking at the University of the Philippines.

He admits that he would often skip classes just to keep up with the frenzy that went along the staging of a major golf tournament.

We are covering the Goma Cup in Boracay starting tomorrow, upon the invitation of Smart's public affairs head **Mon Isberto**. Thankfully, Mon has an ever-efficient staff led by **Ruth Tadeo** and **Marilyn Rivera**, who always take care of their media invitees every year.

We are flying to the island on Asian Spirit, the official carrier of the event.

RICHARD Gomez with Fairways and Bluewaters chair Toti Cariño.

Take a closer look at the intriguing, humorous lives of 4 young professionals living in Miami.

grapevine

You'll surely tune in week after week for this hit comedy that tackles modern day issues - friendship, commitment and love - with wit and realism.

There's Susan... a dedicated matchmaker who can spot a connection between people. David... a man who has been in love with Susan for 10 years. Matt... recently divorced and back on the dating scene. And Thumper... the city's newest television personality and most eligible bachelor.

Starring: Kristy Swanson, George Eads, David Sutcliffe and Steven Eckholdt

STUDIO 23

Premieres tonight at 9:30pm

SM CINEMA GUIDE

SM Dial-A-Movie • Tel. 633-9999

NOW SHOWING

SM CITY BACOOR 4173868

1	DOLBY SURROUND	VIRGIN WIFE
2	DOLBY SURROUND	VITAL PARTS
3	DOLBY DIGITAL	CAST AWAY
4	DOLBY SURROUND	FAMILY MAN
5	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	VERTICAL LIMIT
6	DOLBY SURROUND	102 DALMATIANS
7	DOLBY SURROUND	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS
8	DOLBY SURROUND	DUDE, WHERE'S MY CAR

SM CENTERPOINT 7149522 • 7161416

1	DOLBY SURROUND	102 DALMATIANS
2	DOLBY SURROUND	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS
3	DTS	CAST AWAY
4	DOLBY SURROUND	PROOF OF LIFE
5	DOLBY DIGITAL	VERTICAL LIMIT
6	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	WHAT WOMEN WANT
7	DOLBY SURROUND	FAMILY MAN
8	DOLBY SURROUND	CAST AWAY
9	DOLBY SURROUND	BOUNCE
10	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	VIRGIN WIFE

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 9350749

1	DOLBY SURROUND	PROOF OF LIFE
2	DOLBY SURROUND	BOUNCE
3	DOLBY SURROUND	FAMILY MAN
4	DOLBY DIGITAL	CAST AWAY
5	DOLBY SURROUND	BOOBA
6	DOLBY SURROUND	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS
7	DOLBY DIGITAL	CAST AWAY
8	DOLBY SURROUND	102 DALMATIANS
9	DOLBY SURROUND	VERTICAL LIMIT
10	DOLBY SURROUND	BALA KO ANG BAHALA SA IYO
11	DOLBY SURROUND	VITAL PARTS
12	DOLBY SURROUND	VIRGIN WIFE

SM CITY MANILA 5239240

1	DOLBY DIGITAL	NURSE BETTY
2	DOLBY DIGITAL	FAMILY MAN
3	DOLBY SURROUND	WHAT WOMEN WANT
4	DOLBY SURROUND	CAST AWAY
5	DOLBY DIGITAL	102 DALMATIANS
6	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	CAST AWAY
7	DOLBY SURROUND	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS
8	DOLBY SURROUND	VIRGIN WIFE
9	DOLBY SURROUND	VERTICAL LIMIT
10	DOLBY SURROUND	BOOBA
11	DOLBY SURROUND	PROOF OF LIFE
12	DOLBY SURROUND	BOUNCE

GUADALUPE COMM'L CTR 8820950

1	ULTRA SURROUND	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS
2	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	102 DALMATIANS
3	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	BALA KO ANG BAHALA SA IYO

SM MEGAMALL 6331901 • 6329401

1	DOLBY DIGITAL	VERTICAL LIMIT
2	DOLBY SURROUND	CAST AWAY
3	DOLBY DIGITAL	FAMILY MAN
4	DTS	CAST AWAY
5	DOLBY SURROUND	102 DALMATIANS
6	DOLBY SURROUND	BOUNCE
7	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
8	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
9	DOLBY SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
10	DOLBY SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
11	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
12	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

SM CITY NORTH EDSA 9295452

1	DOLBY SURROUND	VIRGIN WIFE
2	DOLBY SURROUND	SA YIONG MGA HAPLOS
3	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	VERTICAL LIMIT
4	DOLBY SURROUND	CAST AWAY
5	DOLBY SURROUND	FAMILY MAN
6	DOLBY SURROUND	BOUNCE
7	DTS	CAST AWAY
8	DOLBY DIGITAL	102 DALMATIANS
9	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	VITAL PARTS
10	DOLBY SURROUND	NURSE BETTY
11	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	WHAT WOMEN WANT
12	DOLBY SURROUND	PROOF OF LIFE

SM SOUTHMALL 8066888 • 8066782

1	ULTRA SURROUND	VERTICAL LIMIT
2	ULTRA SURROUND	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS
3	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	CAST AWAY
4	ULTRA SURROUND	102 DALMATIANS
5	ULTRA SURROUND	PROOF OF LIFE
6	ULTRA SURROUND	BOOBA
7	ULTRA SURROUND	FAMILY MAN
8	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	CAST AWAY
9	ULTRA SURROUND	VIRGIN WIFE
10	ULTRA SURROUND	BOUNCE

TUTUBAN CENTER 2514302

1	ULTRA SURROUND	CAST AWAY
2	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	102 DALMATIANS
3	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	BALA KO ANG BAHALA SA 'YO
4	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	VIRGIN WIFE

SM CEBU 2313876

1	DOLBY SURROUND	CAST AWAY
2	ULTRA SURROUND	BOUNCE
3	ULTRA SURROUND	LITTLE NICKY
4	ULTRA SURROUND	BODY TO BODY
5	ULTRA SURROUND	PELIKULA AT LIPUNAN
6	ULTRA SURROUND	BOOBA
7	DOLBY SURROUND	VERTICAL LIMIT

SM ILOILO 3209422

1	ULTRA SURROUND	RED PLANET
2	ULTRA SURROUND	BALAHIBONG PUSA
3	ULTRA SURROUND	VERTICAL LIMIT
4	ULTRA SURROUND	BOOBA
5	ULTRA SURROUND	BOUNCE
6	ULTRA SURROUND	CAST AWAY
7	ULTRA SURROUND	DUDE, WHERE'S MY CAR
8	ULTRA SURROUND	TABI TABI PO

SM PAMPANGA 7128015

1	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	CAST AWAY
2	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	102 DALMATIANS
3	DOLBY SURROUND	PROOF OF LIFE
4	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	IKA-7 GLORYA
5	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	VERTICAL LIMIT
6	DOLBY SURROUND	VITAL PARTS

Movies are subject to change without prior notice.

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GLORIETTA 1 formerly QUAD

1	CAST AWAY
2	102 DALMATIANS
3	FAMILY MAN
4	VERTICAL LIMIT

GLORIETTA 4 All Digital Sound

1	BOUNCE in DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
2	WHAT WOMEN WANT in DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	CAST AWAY THX in DSD/SDDS/DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4	NURSE BETTY in DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5	102 DALMATIANS in DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
6	FAMILY MAN in DTS/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
7	PROOF OF LIFE in DTS DIGITAL SOUND

Art Film

GREENBELT

1	CAST AWAY in DOLBY STEREO DIGITAL SOUND
2	FAMILY MAN in SONY DYNAMIC DIGITAL SOUND
3	NURSE BETTY in DOLBY STEREO DIGITAL SOUND
4	SOON TO OPEN Onstage

ALABANG TOWN CENTER

1	CAST AWAY THX in DSD/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
2	FAMILY MAN in DSD DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	102 DALMATIANS in DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4	NURSE BETTY in DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5	BOUNCE in DTS DIGITAL SOUND

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DDS)	FAMILY MAN
2 (SDDS)	CAST AWAY
3 (DTS)	CAST AWAY
4 GOLD (DTS)	PROOF OF LIFE
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	BOUNCE
6 GOLD (SDDS)	102 DALMATIANS
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	VERTICAL LIMIT
8 [illegible]	102 DALMATIANS
9 [illegible]	WHAT WOMEN WANT
10 [illegible]	BALA KO ANG BAHALA SA 'YO

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486

1	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS
2	VIRGIN WIFE
3 (DTS)	LAKAS AT PAG IBIG
4	
5	
6 (DTS)	

Golden Pearl THX

Masagana CINEMAX 1-2 & 3
(Kalaw) tel 536.4315

1 (DOLBY)	FAMILY MAN
2 (DTS)	LAKAS AT PAG IBIG
3	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 831.6603

1	VIRGIN WIFE
2	FAMILY WIFE
3	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS

starmall Movies
(Shaw Blvd.) tel 724.4986

1	CAST AWAY
2	LAKAS AT PAG-IBIG
3	BALA KO ANG BAHALA SA 'YO
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	102 DALMATIANS
5	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS

Metropolis
(Alabang) tel 543.4001

1	LAKAS AT PAG IBIG
2	IKA-7 GLORYA
3	HAPLOS
4	BALA KO ANG BAHALA SA 'YO
5	VIRGIN WIFE
6	CAST AWAY
7	FAMILY MAN
8	102 DALMATIANS

Uniwide Metromall
(Las Piñas) tel. 873.5606 loc. 1074
WATCH 3 MOVIE FOR ONLY P30.00

1	
2	TALAHIB AT ROSAS
3	LITTLE HEROES IN CHINA
4	MEN
5	-
6	

Uniwide Coastal Mall
(Parañaque) tel 879.0001 loc. 2152
WATCH 3 MOVIE FOR ONLY P30.00

1	
2	HAPDI SA TAG-INIT
3	BOYFRIEND KONG PARI
4	THUNDER MISSION

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	BOOBA
2	VERTICAL LIMIT

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL, INC.
tel 930.9515

1	HAPLOS
2	VIRGIN WIFE
3	LAKAS AT PAG IBIG

Spring
(Libertad, Pasay City) tel 831.7864

1	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS
A	LAKAS AT PAG IBIG

JC Cinema
(Parañaque) tel 825.8626

1	LAKAS AT PAG IBIG
3	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS

GOTESCO CINEMA

City
(Manila) tel 734.8588

1 (DOLBY)	CAST AWAY
2	VIRGIN WIFE
3	LAKAS AT PAG IBIG
4	BALA KO ANG BAHALA SA 'YO
5	NURSE BETTY
6	HAPLOS
7 (DTS)	FAMILY MAN
8 (SDDS)	102 DALMATIANS
9 (DOLBY)	VERTICAL LIMIT

Caloocan
tel 362.3508

2	CAST AWAY
3	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS
4	BALA KO ANG BAHALA SA 'YO
5	
6	

Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS
2	BALA KO ANG BAHALA SA 'YO
3	LAKAS AT PAG IBIG
4 (SDDS)	VIRGIN WIFE
5	FAMILY MAN
6 (DOLBY)	102 DALMATIANS
7 (DTS)	CAST AWAY
8	IKA-7 GLORYA
9	VERTICAL LIMIT

Commonwealth
tel 951.0083

1 (DTS)	CAST AWAY
2	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS
3	102 DALMATIANS
4	BALA KO ANG BAHALA SA 'YO
5 (SDDS)	VIRGIN WIFE
6	FAMILY MAN
7 (DOLBY)	NURSE BETTY
8	LAKAS AT PAG IBIG

Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1	VIRGIN WIFE
2	LAKAS AT PAG IBIG
3 (DTS)	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS
4	CAST AWAY
5 (SDDS)	102 DALMATIANS
6 (DOLBY)	BALA KO ANG BAHALA SA 'YO
7 (DOLBY)	FAMILY MAN

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1	BALA KO ANG BAHALA SA 'YO

Sampaguita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888

1	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson	BALA KO ANG BAHALA SA 'YO
Lords	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS
Jennet	VIRGIN WIFE

MARRE PLACE Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS
2	102 DALMATIANS
3	CAST AWAY
4	LAKAS AT PAG-IBIG

Prima
(Pasig) tel 641.1215

1	
3	HAPLOS

Super Cinerama
(Manila) tel 733.4226 or 733.4238

1	CAST AWAY
2	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS
3	LAKAS AT PAG IBIG
4	BALA KO ANG BAHALA SA 'YO
5	FAMILY MAN

Divisoria Mall
(Manila) tel 244.4560 or 244.4619

1	BALA KO ANG BAHALA SA 'YO
2	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS
3	LAKAS AT PAG IBIG
4	VIRGIN WIFE
5	IKA-7 GLORYA
6	VITAL PART

Baclaran LRT Cinema
tel 512.0115 or 512.0116

1	SAYONG MGA HAPLOS
2	LAKAS AT PAG-IBIG
3	BALA KO ANG BAHALA SAYO

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
tel (049) 534.2185 / 534.2198

1	IKAPITONG GLORIA
2	102 DALMATIANS
3 (DTS)	CAST AWAY

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	IKA-7 GLORYA
2 (DTS)	WHAT WOMEN WANT
3 (DOLBY)	102 DALMATIANS
4	CAST AWAY

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	BALA KO ANG BAHALA SAYO
2	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS
3	LAKAS AT PAG IBIG
4 (DTS)	CAST AWAY

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	102 DALMATIANS
2	IKA-7 GLORYA
3 (DTS)	CAST AWAY
4	VIRGIN WIFE
5	LAKAS AT PAG IBIG

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	CAST AWAY
2	102 DALMATIANS
3	IKA-7 GLORYA

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 536.5101

1	CAST AWAY
2	102 DALMATIANS
3	IKA-7 GLORYA

Olivarez Tagaytay
tel (046) 413.0311

1	PROOF OF LIFE
2	VIRGIN WIFE
3	VITAL PARTS

Morales Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.9736

1	102 DALMATIANS
2	CAST AWAY
3	WHAT WOMEN WANT

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1	102 DALMATIANS
2	VIRGIN WIFE
3	BALA KO ANG BAHALA SA 'YO
4	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 243.2783

1 (DTS)	102 DALMATIANS
2 (DTS)	RESERVE

Fourstep
(Cavite) tel (046) 416.2385

1	LAKAS AT PAG IBIG

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	IKA-7 GLORYA
2	LAKAS AT PAG IBIG
3	VIRGIN WIFE

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	IKA-7 GLORYA
2	DUDE
3	VERTICAL LIMIT
4	VIRGIN WIFE

Berma
tel 879.2168

1	
2	

CitiMall
(Parañaque) tel 820.7269

1	LAKAS AT PAG IBIG
2	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS
3	BALA KO ANG BAHALA SA 'YO
4	102 DALMATIANS

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX)	CAST AWAY
2	BOUNCE
3	PROOF OF LIFE
4 (DTS EX)	VITAL PART

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

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a special presentation

New venue for all kinds of production

AYALA Center has proven once again its leadership in giving the ultimate in innovative entertainment concept with the opening of Onstage Greenbelt.

Onstage is a world-class theater situated right in the heart of Greenbelt Mall. It has an 800-seating capacity, complete with a carpeted aisle and strip lights.

It also has a catwalk and a 1.8-meter deep orchestra pit which can easily accommodate 15 to 20 persons.

The stage area is 13 meters wide, big enough to accommodate all kinds of productions—from theater to ballet to all kinds of concerts, product launches and more.

For inquiries and reservations, please call Onstage at 752-7877 or 752-7861 to 62 and look for Lissa Japsay or Rolly Duenas.

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e-mail:htc@netasia-mla.net
http://www.robinsonsmovieword.com

NOW SHOWING

Movies are subject to change without prior notice

ERMITA
536-7809-14

1. CAST AWAY
2. VERTICAL LIMIT
3. 102 DALMATIANS
4. SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS
5. PROOF OF LIFE
6. BOUNCE
7. THE FAMILY MAN

GALLERIA

UNDER RENOVATION

Robinsons Movieworld aims to bring a new dimension to your viewing experience -- 10 brand new cinemas equipped with THX, DTS, SDDS, DOLBY DIGITAL soundsystem.

IMUS
(046)875-3838

1. VERTICAL LIMIT
2. DUDE, WHERE'S MY CAR
3. THE FAMILY MAN
4. CAST AWAY
5. HAPLOS
6. 102 DALMATIANS

BACOLOD
(034)441-0453

1. VERTICAL LIMIT
2. BOOBA
3. CAST AWAY
4. RED PLANET
5. SUPER IDOL
6. DUDE, WHERE'S MY CAR

DOLBY dts SDDS

Sax music at Ciao

SAXOPHONIST Tots Tolentino plays pop-jazz sounds at 10 tonight and on Feb. 27 at Ciao Bar Ristorante at Dusit Hotel Nikko Manila.

Minimum consumable charge is P325++. For inquiries, call Dusit Hotel at 867-3333 or MaxiMedia at 813-8999.

TOLENTINO

Concert party

THE UNIVERSITY of the Philippines Delta Lambda Sigma Sorority and Sigma Rho Fraternity, with Close-Up, Lee Jeans, Secret, femalenetwork.com, Seventeen and Channel [V], will hold a concert party, "Frenetic," featuring Freestyle at 7 tonight at the UP Bahay ng Alumni in Diliman, Quezon City.

The evening will also include a live fashion show featuring the work of up and coming young student designers, to be modeled also by students.

Tickets are priced at P100. For further information, call 0917-365-1532 or 0919-375-9576.

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101

ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	VITAL PARTS
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	CAST AWAY
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	102 DALMATIANS
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	VERTICAL LIMIT
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	PROOF OF LIFE
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7 (DOLBY)	NURSE BETTY
FARMERS PLAZA-1 (DOLBY)	BALA KO ANG BAHALA SA 'YO
FARMERS PLAZA-2 (DOLBY)	IKA-7 GLORYA
FIESTA CARNIVAL	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
NEW FRONTIER	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS
MIRAMAR	VIRGIN WIFE
ODEON	CAST AWAY
ODEON-2	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS
ROBEN	VIRGIN WIFE
TANDEM-1	IKA PITONG GLORIA
TANDEM-2	VIRGIN WIFE
TIMES	SCARY MOVIE / MEN OF HONOR
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	ANAK NG YAKUSA
ACT-2	ANAK NG KANO
ACT-3	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
ACT-4	TURN ON
CORONET-2	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS
QUEZON-1	VIRGIN WIFE
REMAR	VIRGIN WIFE
REMAR-2	LAKAS AT PAG IBIG
CUBAO	
OCEAN SUPERAMA	BALA KO ANG BAHALA SA 'YO
OCEAN CINEMA-A	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS
OCEAN CINEMA-B	LAKAS AT PAG IBIG
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	VERTICAL LIMIT
CINEMA-2	102 DALMATIANS
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-54091 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS
CINEMA-2	BALA KO ANG BAHALA SA 'YO
CINEMA-3	LAKAS AT PAG IBIG
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	VERTICAL LIMIT
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	VITAL PARTS
CINEMA-6	IKA-7 GLORYA
CINEMA-7	VIRGIN WIFE
CINEMA-8	WHAT WOMEN WANT
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	CAST AWAY
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	FAMILY MAN
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	102 DALMATIANS
CINEMA-12	NURSE BETTY
CINEMA-14	PROOF OF LIFE
CINEMA-15	BOUNCE
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS
CINEMA-3	LAKAS AT PAG IBIG
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	BOUNCE
CINEMA-2	CAST AWAY
CINEMA-3	FAMILY MAN
CINEMA-4	102 DALMATIANS
CINEMA-5	CAST AWAY
CINEMA-6	FAMILY MAN

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NOW SHOWING

CAST AWAY
Drama-Adventure-Romance
Tom Hanks & Helen Hunt
(PG - 13 RT - 2:20)

VERTICAL LIMIT
Action-Adventure-Thriller
Chris O' Donnel
Bill Paxton
Robin Tunney
Scott Glenn
(PG - 13 RT - 2:10)

February 20 - Tuesday
5.00 PM - Cast Away
7.50 PM - Cast Away
10.40 PM - Vertical Limit

PAY IT FORWARD
Kevin Spacey & Helen Hunt
opens Wednesday February 21

Get a copy of the 3rd issue of Pelikula! A Journal of Philippine Cinema and learn more about Comedy King Dolphy and other Filipino artist. Movie fans & idols

Hear the Difference. Feel the Excitement

ENTERTAINMENT

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

Survival, according to Zemeckis

BY EMMIE G. VELARDE

REVIEW

THE EXTRAORDINARY events in his life may have been triggered by his name: Chuck No-land.

A hotshot but manic Federal Express systems engineer, Chuck Noland knows exactly what to do and how at any given moment, literally anywhere in the world. All these elements defining his person are distorted when his plane crashes somewhere in the South Pacific. The only survivor, he is washed ashore on a deserted island.

He who used to be obsessed with keeping track of time is suddenly robbed of a working schedule and need for a stopwatch. He who could make sense of any written address in any language, and find it across cultures and continents, suddenly had nowhere to go. Back in civilization, this would have killed him instantly; but for now these are the least of his problems.

His immediate concerns are so fundamental, they are mind-boggling: Where is he exactly, and are there other people within a few thousand miles? How does he crack open a coconut with a stone? How does he make a fire, so he can have crabmeat instead of crab ooze?

Then it gets really bad. Should he try to do anything about the situation, or should he just kill himself? Worse, who does he discuss this with?

Chuck Noland pays the debts of several incarnations wholesale by this singular twist of fate. Stranded four and a half years! He'd sooner have risked drowning or mugging by humpback whales had he known for sure that Semirara was nearby.

Filmmaker Robert Zemeckis (Forrest Gump) says the main question that propelled the movie was, "What would this really be like for somebody?" Screenwriter William Broyles Jr. ("Apollo 13"), former editor in chief of Newsweek, camped on a remote Mexican beach where, like Noland, he had to find shelter, create fire, learn to fish without a pole, and develop a meaningful relationship with a volleyball.

That's just research, however; Broyles wasn't marooned for four years. Even then, the plot of "Cast Away" is in no real danger of being dismissed outright as fantastic, not in these parts anyway where time has been known to stop more than two decades for Japanese stragglers left behind in Philippines jungles.

He's got Tom

Zemeckis says his next challenge was, "How do you make reality interesting as a movie?"

The story's four and a half years translates to about one hour of screen time with hardly any dialogue, no voice-over narration, and no musical score. He admits that he was helped along monumentally by the fact that "I've got Tom." In fact, the project is reportedly Hanks' brainchild, broached to studio bosses at first jokingly as some sort of "Chuck of the Jungle."

Speaking of monumental help, there's THX (choose the theater you'll go to for this movie). What are the most spectacular seascapes without ominously roaring waves? THX makes even just the steady fall of rain one notch above menacing and, in fact, renders the plane crash sequence infinitely more gripping. Plus: Monurikik, sparkling site of the island scenes, is quite a piece of work by nature. Ages ago, most tropical territories must have looked like this. Then men discovered them. To insure this particular island's protection, Zemeckis and most of the crew, including Hanks, were required to participate in an ancient ceremony with neighboring tribal chiefs.

Curiosity

It is a testimony to Zemeckis' mastery of his medium that "Cast Away" manages to keep most moviegoers in their seats. I'm quite sure it isn't the love story that does this, although Helen Hunt's confusion over her lover's return from the land of the non-living is infectious.

(No matter how tempting, let us not forget the characters around Noland before and after the crash, although for your own sake, do try to forget the FedEx pitch.)

The binding appeal is very likely the fruit of that irrepressible urge called curiosity—in this case, about possible dementia by isolation—or a growing interest in the "mechanics" of solitude. An international organization of peace advocates recently launched a movement they are calling "Silence Odyssey," an experiment in quieting the mind as well as the mouth, that will run for a whole year, meaning, no unnecessary talking or thinking till the end of 2001. But this is another story.

Scarred for life

Equally, it is a testimony to Hanks' skill and dedication to his craft that he succeeds in conveying an astonishing range of mental states, from rage to defeat, from despair to longing, from hysteria to stupor.

For the record, he shed 55 pounds and survived a potentially lethal infection in the course of filming (the island sequences were shot in two sections, eight months apart, so that Hanks could lose the girth and grow a beard). With "nothing to react to but the wind and trees," the 44-year-old two-time Oscar winner concedes that it was certainly hard work communicating profound loneliness using no words.

And yet now, when asked if the role changed him in any way, his answer is, "Personally? No." He's been scarred for life, he says, but mostly just around the knees.

I've been irreversibly dented as well: I will never be able to look at the FedEx logo again without thinking of Tom Hanks and Castaway Chuck.

RM TALENTS: (front row, from left) Nadia Soriano, Jennifer Palor, Rowena Michael, Lily Beth Garcia; (second row, from let) Demi Lumacad, Willy Bayona and Bembet Buena.

Bands liven up happy hours at Conservatory

THE BANDS of Roy Martinez (RM) make the after-hour grind (6:15 to 9:15 p.m.) at The Conservatory of Manila Peninsula one big blast.

Headlining the nightly celebration is the RM Trio, made up of seasoned instrumentalists who perform jazz, standard, pop and top 40s repertoire.

Bass and guitar player Bembet Buena plays jazz and anything under the sun. Having started playing professionally at 14, Bembet has performed in top nightspots in Manila, Japan, Singapore and the US.

Pianist of 30 years Demi Lumacad plays jazz and top 40s. Willy Bayona not only plays drums, he also sings a la Frank Sinatra.

Adding feminine magic to the Trio on rotation basis are RM vocalists Rowena Michael, Nadia Soriano, Jennifer Palor and Lily Beth Garcia.

Meanwhile, another RM band, Funk Academy, is also making waves in the lounge circuit with their dance music and other kinds of repertoire spanning the full spectrum of musical genres. Composed of band leader Joey Nuguid (formerly of the Boss Band), vocalists John Clark, Maribeth Torralba and Myra Madera and rhythm section musicians Reynaldo Mangubat, Jesus Villaflor, Fredric Redoro and Elmer Alcover, the group livens up Strumm's Makati on Fridays and The Conservatory on Saturdays.

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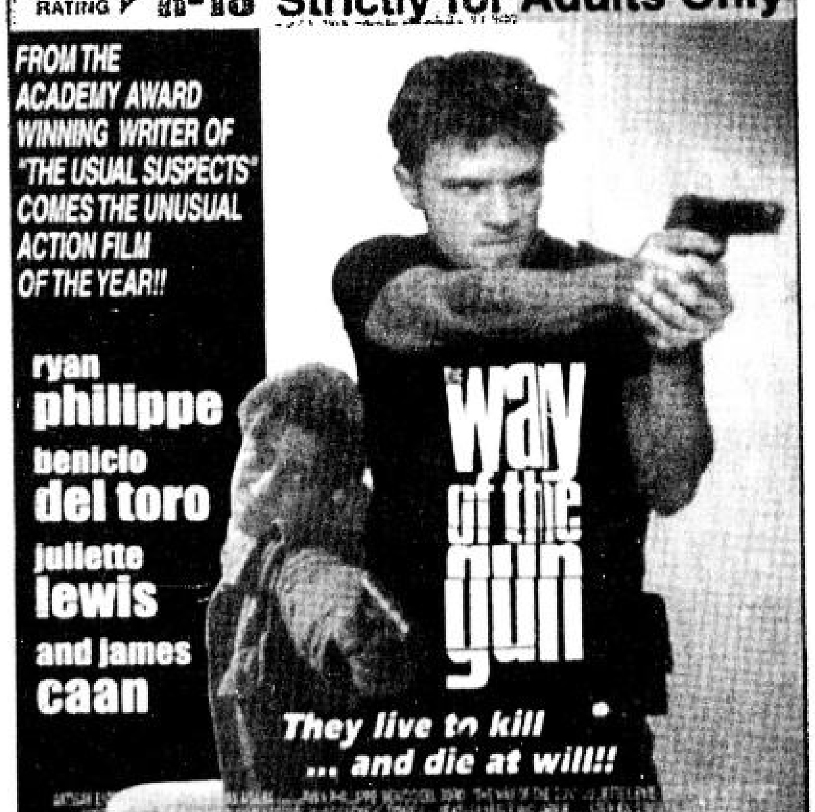

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January budget gap shrinks to ₱6.4B

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE BUDGET deficit shrank by more than two-thirds in January, signaling that the new government of President Macapagal-Arroyo is serious about tackling one of the biggest threats to the country's economic growth.

The monthly deficit narrowed to P6.4 billion last month from P21.7 billion in December. This was, however, drastically up from actual January 2000 budget gap of P114 million last year.

That was the smallest deficit since April 2000 and puts the government on track to meet its full-year deficit target of between P130 billion and P145 billion.

Under former President Joseph Estrada, who was ousted last month, the 2000 budget deficit ballooned to a record P136 billion, more than double the government's original target, as ineffective tax collection crimped revenue. That caused the International Monetary Fund to cancel a $314-million loan in October.

In the first month of the year, the government generated revenues of P49.856 billion but spent P56.242 billion.

Of the total collection, the Bureau of Internal Revenue brought in P39.29 billion; the Bureau of Customs, P6.41 billion, and the Treasury, P1.6 billion.

Romulo said the expenses for January included interest payments of P15.08 billion. Of this amount, P10.11 billion or 67 percent were for domestic obligations while the rest were paid to foreign creditors.

The finance chief said the deficit for the year could still widen because of government guarantees now amounting to P7 billion to P9 billion that had to be paid.

He said the Macapagal administration was preparing the budget for 2002 and would re-enact last year's budget after Congress failed to pass the budget for 2001.

IMF officials met with government officials last week to discuss ways to rein in the deficit and revive the country's ailing economy. The Macapagal administration has said it aims to cut the deficit to 3.9 percent of gross domestic product this year from last year's 4.8 percent.

Finance Secretary Alberto Romulo said last month the government plans to slash public spending to "austerity proportions" to keep the deficit in check.

The finance chief insisted he referred to the consolidated public sector deficit and not merely the national government deficit.

"The worst-case CPSD (consolidated public sector deficit) as announced by the President is P225 billion. But we want to bring this down to P145 billion or possibly even P130 billion," said Romulo.

In its presentation to the IMF, the economic team said tax enhancement measures and higher earnings from privatization could bring the estimated deficit of P145 billion down to an ambitious P80 billion.

The measures to be implemented by BIR were estimated to add an additional P20 billion to P35 billion while the schemes proposed by Customs were seen to contribute another P20 billion.

Proceeds from privatization of big-ticket items that were earlier pegged at only P7 billion to P10 billion were later estimated to yield as much as P20 billion, based on the documents presented to the IMF.

The Fund's worst-case budget deficit scenario was placed at P177 billion, or 4.3 percent of gross domestic product, while a best-case setting was seen at P88.4 billion or 2.3 percent of GDP.

The government's estimate of a P145-billion worst-case budget gap for the year was equivalent to 4 percent of GDP. *With a report from Bloomberg*

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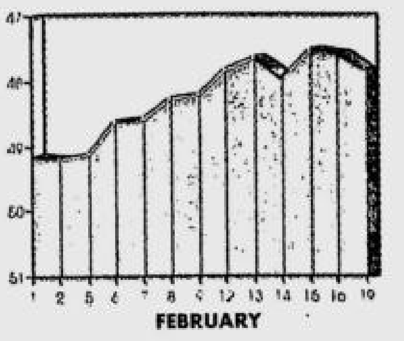

GRAPHS BY EDWARD GALLARDO

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The US dollar was trading at 115.96 as of 5 p.m., Feb. 19, 2001

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STOCK MARKET

Shares fall 0.9%

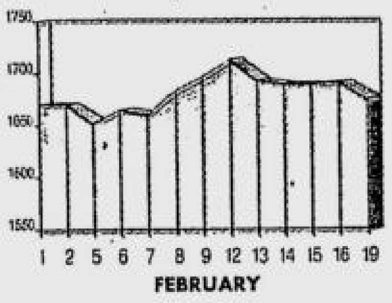
SHARE prices fell 0.9 percent in thin trade yesterday as investors took profits after a disappointing calendar 2000 results of key listed companies.

"People perceive that shares are fairly valued, and it's time for them to take profit," said Henry Ong of KGI Securities.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index lost 15.96 points to 1,673.95.

Volume rose slightly to 1.29 billion shares but value fell to P443 million compared to 1.26 billion shares worth P945 million traded last Friday. *AFP*

PSE Composite Index



(See stock market report on Page B2)

91-day T-bill yield falls for 14th week

THE BENCHMARK interest rate fell for a 14th week as money managers bid for almost three times the debt on offer.

At yesterday's Bureau of Treasury auction, the average yield on the 91-day Treasury bill, which banks use to price loans, fell to 10.525 percent from 10.607 percent last week. It is the lowest since Oct. 16 when the 91-day T-bill yield was at 9.892 percent.

Money managers tendered P2.795 billion for just P1 billion of 91-day T-bills on offer, allowing government to make a full award.

The 91-day rate fell despite the lack of a reduction in the overnight rate of the central bank. The central bank cut rates eight out of 11 weeks from December through last week.

The Treasury said the 182-day bill's yield fell to 11.9 percent from 11.913 percent last week. The 364-day bill yield fell to 12.50 percent from 12.632 percent. The Treasury sold P2.59 billion of the two bills, of P3 billion on offer.

Meantime, newly appointed National Treasurer Sergio Edeza said yesterday the government would be reviewing the offering size of government securities.

"We will be looking at what sizes for each tenors should be. We will look at what will be increased or decreased," Edeza told reporters after the Treasury's weekly T-bill auction.

When asked about the time schedule for the decision, he said: "We will come up with something in two weeks time."

The Treasury currently offers P1 billion worth of 91-day T-bills, and P1.5 billion each for 182-day and 364-day T-bills at its regular Monday auction.

Edeza was central bank's director for treasury during the administration of former President Fidel Ramos. His last stint was as senior vice president for fund management at the country's largest bank, Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. *Bloomberg, Reuters*

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No glut, no Gloria

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

NOWADAYS, office rental fees are depressed, and they're in fact down by more than 70 percent for some buildings, particularly those highrises right at the heart of the very financial district in the exact hub of awfully big businesses in this woefully poor country.

That of course refers to the business district in Makati City. For the sake of those movie superstars' gutsy spouses who are going for glory by running for public office, the "poor country" is none other than the Philippines. No guts, as they say, no glory.

Why the hell are they running? No, sir, it's not because they want to provide some entertainment during the campaign. You know—like clowns! As I said, they're married to movie stars, not stripteasers. They just want to, ahh, "serve."

But even when office rent is, now one more time with feelings, down by more than 70 percent? In Makati, at that! This never happened before, except perhaps during the war, but then at that time, who held office in Makati? I guess only the mayor's wife.

* * *

ANYWAY, the real estate market is so depressed, buildings in Makati are empty. Many of them are sparkling new. Meaning, billions of pesos are still tied down on them. It's a glut, and it's one reason Gloriaetta got into power. What's that—no glut, no Gloria?

In a formal press conference, Gloriaetta said our economy was "tattered." Well, real estate in Makati is down. It's her biggest concern. Imagine, what if those office buildings are not occupied soon? Heaven forbid, you can't buy Zagu anymore, you know.

"Tattered," by the way, is also the word which is often used to describe "rags." But no, my dear Diokno, "tattered" has nothing to do with some of the appointees in this new cute administration. Those are "trapos." All right, close, but not quite.

This cute administration just announced the good news. The International Monetary Fund, or the IMF, doesn't believe that we need a program. In IMF parlance, "program" actually means "we need to borrow a lot of money."

* * *

FOR money is what the IMF lends to its members, mainly to its needy members like the Philippines, to tide them over their forex needs. When, in the past, we could not earn enough dollars to pay for our debts and imports, we always ran to the IMF.

We don't need an IMF program today, because we are doing fine in our international payments. Look, in the so-called current account, we had a yearly surplus of $7 billion even before the time of Gloriaetta. That's a "tattered" economy for you!

So now I get it: Because of the depressed market for office space in Makati, our economy must really be in a terrible shape. Well, if a financial firm with a networth of only P13 billion puts up a building worth P12 billion, that's really terrible!

It means a lot of money, maybe even hundreds of billions of pesos, are tied up on wonderfully idle buildings. They could have gone elsewhere. Fortunately for us, the same scarce resources could have gone to such stupid things as food production or housing.

* * *

IN Quezon City alone, which in itself can be considered an entire metropolis, there are some 160,000 families known as "squatters." They are nowadays called by some politicos as . . . well, "temporary dwellers."

They're more than half of the city's population. Really, more than a million people are dwelling temporarily in places in Quezon City where they should not be dwelling at all. It is therefore the city's biggest problem.

They are naturally poor. As such, they do not pay taxes. And precisely because they are poor, they need the most attention from the city government. Education. Security. Health. Name the service, the city must finance it for those poor people.

How do you solve the problem? By giving them better jobs, how else? That's why Quezon City Mayor, este, Councilor Chuck Mathay is drawing up a "master plan." It hopes to address part of the problem. God bless you, Chuck, and it's about time, too!

* * *

ISN'T it a crime when billions upon billions of pesos are tied down on idle real estate ventures, when millions upon millions of people are, ahh, dwelling temporarily in makeshift cartoon houses? Well, it is, but nobody gets jailed.

Anyway, nobody also goes to jail for paying off congressmen to confirm the appointment of Vice President Teofisto Guingona. This is so because, apparently, the rumors are not true that payoffs were made at somebody's office at the Batasan.

Such rumors were already vehemently denied by top officials of the House of Representatives. No, they said, it's not true that the payoffs were done in the office. So where? They actually made at somebody's residence. Hoy, permanent, not temporary!

It is going to become a "tattered" economy, indeed, if you get things from Congress by paying off, whether it's in the office or it's in the house. I just don't know if the congressmen will use the money to rent office spaces in Makati.

Merchandise trade surplus surges 56% on weak imports

BY DORIS C. DUMLAO

THE COUNTRY's merchandise trade surplus surged 56 percent to $6.69 billion last year from $4.29 billion in 1999, as manufacturers bought fewer raw materials and a political crisis prompted companies to delay investments, the National Statistics Office reported yesterday.

Total external trade in goods rose 5.6 percent from a year earlier to $69.46 billion.

Merchandise exports grew 8.7 percent to $38.08 billion while imports went up by 2.1 percent to $31.39 billion. These were more moderate than the 18.8-percent rise in exports and 3.6-percent increase in imports in 1999.

Analysts from Deutsche Bank AG, one of Europe's biggest banks, have said the Philippines may experience a slowdown in exports this year as demand from key markets like the United States, which is seeing its economy cool down after years of remarkable growth, ease.

Imports fell 15.7 percent in December from a year earlier to $2.24 billion after gaining 13.5 percent in November.

The slump in imports, led by a drop in purchases of electronic parts, suggests exporters plan to cut production as orders from the United States and other markets decline. At the same time, a political scandal that ended in former President Joseph Estrada's ouster last month damped consumer spending and prompted companies to hold off on investments.

The decline in imports "will soon show up in the export numbers as well, given that some of the global slowdown is going to affect the Philippines," said David Cohen, an economist at Standard & Poor's MMS International in Singapore.

From the previous month, imports fell 53 percent and the trade surplus widened 40 percent, without adjusting for seasonal changes.

Imports of electronics and components, which made up 18.6 percent of the total, slumped 42.1 percent from a year earlier to $417 million. That did not bode well for the Philippine economy, which relies on computer chips and other electronics goods for about two-thirds of total exports.

Imports of industrial machinery and equipment fell 7.4 percent to $140.5 million, pointing to a slowdown in manufacturing activity.

Many companies delayed investments to expand their business as they awaited the outcome of Estrada's impeachment trial on corruption charges. President Macapagal-Arroyo replaced Estrada on Jan. 20.

"Because of the political crisis, no one wanted to move," said Erico Claudio, head of research at Worldsec International Securities Phils Inc. "We were hoping the damage wouldn't be as bad."

Purchases of telecommunications equipment rose 29.5 percent to $253.5 million amid rising local demand for mobile-phone services. Fuel imports, which made up 10.8 percent of the total, fell 27.6 percent from a year earlier to $240.6 million.

For all of 2000, imports rose 2.1 percent from 1999 to $31.4 billion. The annual trade surplus widened 56 percent from 1999 to $6.7 billion. That was equal to 33.4 percent of last year's gross domestic product, up from 22.3 percent in 1999. *With a report from Bloomberg*

SEC plans to reopen probe of Piltel

BY ELENA R. TORRIJOS

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission is reopening its investigation of Pilipino Telephone Corp. to determine whether the company had misled the public about its financial position more than two years ago.

Documents showed that the SEC would create an investigative team composed of one lawyer and two certified public accountants to check if Piltel window dressed its financial statements for several years up to end-1998.

The investigation will be undertaken under the supervision of the SEC's compliance and enforcement department.

In January 1999, news about Piltel's huge debt burden amounting to billions of pesos came out in the newspapers.

These liabilities were previously disclosed in its periodic reports. However, the impact on the company's operations and liquidity of servicing these debts was not fully discussed in those reports, the SEC said.

The SEC also said the defaults in the payment of interests and the suspension of principal payments in the first week of January were not promptly disclosed.

An investigative team formed by the SEC at that time recommended an actual field audit of the books and records of Piltel and to require the company to execute a sworn detailed explanation on what happened to the company's business affairs.

In its last report on Piltel dated July 23, 1999, the SEC had found that Piltel failed to comply with its obligation to make a full, fair and accurate disclosure to the public of every material fact or event in its business affairs. It said the company did not disclose when it defaulted on the payment of the principal of and interests on its loans.

Last month, Piltel announced that its bondholders have agreed to restructure their exposure to the cellular phone company in line with the company's restructuring program.

Under the plan, half of the P1.3 billion worth of its debts will be converted into convertible preferred shares of Piltel parent firm Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. at 1.1 percent interest per year. Another 25 percent of Piltel's debt will be converted into a 10-year secured bullet loan and the remaining 25 percent will be converted into a secured 15-year term loan.

Piltel recently reported a net loss of more than P1 billion in the fourth quarter last year.

Construction of LRT I extension starts this year

BY GIL C. CABACUNGAN JR.

CANADIAN infrastructure builder SNC Lavalin will break ground this year for the first phase of the $600-million extension of the Light Railway Transit I that will connect Manila to Cavite.

Rey D. Pagtakhan, Canada's Secretary of State for Asia Pacific, said President Macapagal-Arroyo has assured the Canadian government that her administration would honor a deal signed between the Estrada administration and Lavalin for the 27-kilometer extension of LRT I. Pagtakhan, the first Filipino in Canada's government, met with President Macapagal yesterday morning.

Canadian special trade representative Richard Bale said the government's assurance had paved the way for the LRT Authority and Lavalin to finalize the equity structure and the financing for the project.

Lavalin and LRTA finally signed a joint-venture agreement on the project late last year after months of tug-of-war between the Canadian firm and the AMA group over the right to take charge of the project.

Bale said he did not expect any major changes in the deal or any private entity wanting to ease out Lavalin. "Negotiations have gone relatively far and it's too late for a new group to come in and take over. We only need to update government officials on the project because it is complex."

Carlos Borromeo, Department of Transportation and Communications undersecretary for railways and mass transport, said the first phase of the project—which would cover 12 kilometers—would start within the year. He expects the first phase to be completed by 2004 or before President Macapagal's term ends. He expects negotiations to be completed in two to three months.

Borromeo explained that the project would be undertaken under a combination of the build-and-transfer and build-operate-and-own schemes to ensure that the private sector would shoulder the burden of the project's risks.

Based on preliminary discussions, the government will guarantee only the civil works portion of the project while the private sector will cover the electro-mechanical portion or the rolling stock.

Borromeo said there would be no cash out from the government for its share in the project although it would finance the loans from its share of the revenues from the LRT I operations.

DISCLOSURES

PILIPINO Telephone Corp. said its financial statements have yet to be completed and, thus, it could not confirm the reported P1.1 billion loss of the company for 2000.

* * *

RIZAL Commercial Banking Corp. denied it had entered into any tie-up with any foreign bank to bid for the acquisition of Equitable PCI Bank.

* * *

EQUITABLE Bank clarified that the reported loss of P128 million was a result of the P1.22-billion loan-loss provision which the bank carried in the fourth quarter of 2000. If not for this provision, the bank would have reported around P1 billion in net income for the period.

* * *

IMPERIAL Resources Inc.'s Philippine Cyber College signed a second agreement with Cisco to operate another Local Cisco Academy offering IT courses at the college's second center in Malolos, Bulacan.

* * *

ABS-CBN Holdings Corp.'s Philippine Deposit Receipts were reduced by 11,700, bringing its total listed PDRs to 267 million. *Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research*

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of Monday, February 19, 2000)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	7	7	6.9	6.9	420,000
Banco Filipino Sav & Mort	120	120	120	120	170
Bank of the Phil. Islands	70	70	69.5	70	371,000
China Banking Corp.	700	700	700	700	710
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	59.5	59.5	58	58	61,600
Global Business Bank Inc.	65	67	65	65	2,700
Metropolitan Bank & Trust.	230	232	230	232	61,370
Prudential Bank	470	470	470	470	1,050
Philippine National Bank	35.5	35.5	35.5	35.5	3,400
Rizal Comm'l Bkg. Corp. A	28.5	29	28	28.5	10,400
Security Bank Corp.	25	25	25	25	500
Union Bank of the Phil.	28.5	28.5	28.5	28.5	17,900
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.68	1.68	1.66	1.66	100,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	220	220	220	220	110
Manulife Financial Corp.	1185	1190	1185	1190	4,520
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1010	1010	950	980	19,030
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	50	50.5	50	50	182,400
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.73	0.73	0.71	0.71	4,250,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	800,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	10,000
Piltel	0.84	0.84	0.84	0.84	160,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	410,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	840	845	830	840	70,170
Ivantage Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.1	1.1	500,000
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.0775	0.08	0.075	0.0775	150,400,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	53.5	54	53.5	54	7,300
Manila Electric Co. B	61.5	61.5	60.5	61	636,000
Petron Corp.	1.96	2.02	1.96	2	1,434,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.98	1.02	0.98	1	360,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.14	1.14	1.06	1.06	155,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	1.4	1.4	1.34	1.34	3,608,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	10,000
Negros Navigation Co. Inc.	0.19	0.195	0.19	0.195	40,000
William, Gothong & Aboitiz	1.98	2	1.98	2	356,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Alsons Cement Corp.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.26	150,000
Republic Cement Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	100,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	5,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	11.5	12	11.5	11.75	309,900
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	39	39	38.5	39	50,500
RFM Corp.	1.34	1.34	1.32	1.32	2,502,000
Swift Food Inc.	1	1	1	1	100,000
San Miguel Corp. A	50.5	51	50	51	143,800
San Miguel Corp. B	62	62	61.5	62	74,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	450,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con. Res. & Hldg. B	0.57	0.57	0.57	0.57	10,000
Ayala Corp.	8.1	8.3	8.1	8.2	1,225,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.64	1.74	1.64	1.7	2,048,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	12	12.25	11.75	12	2,100
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	4,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	580,000
APC Group Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.26	0.26	1,230,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.007	0.0085	0.007	0.0085	262,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.44	2.6	2.44	2.6	56,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	10,000
Bacnotan Cons. Indus. Inc.	12	12.5	12	12.5	9,600
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.24	0.24	300,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.1	3.1	3.05	3.1	1,872,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.19	0.2	0.19	0.2	30,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.28	2,960,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	10,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.53	0.54	0.53	0.53	1,230,000
Ebecom Holdings Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.155	0.155	410,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.06	0.07	0.06	0.065	4,000,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.48	1.52	1.48	1.48	2,383,000
First Phil. Hldgs. Corp.	24.25	24.25	24	24	157,500
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	50,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	1,010,000
Guoco Holdings (Phils.)	0.32	0.32	0.29	0.29	50,000
Ionics Inc.	14	14	13.75	13.75	401,900
Ipeople Inc.	0.91	0.91	0.91	0.91	10,000
Ipeople Inc. B	0.91	0.91	0.91	0.91	50,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	2.9	2.9	2.85	2.85	27,000
Macroasia Corp.	2	2.04	2	2.02	224,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.019	0.019	0.018	0.019	700,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.97	0.97	0.94	0.96	2,790,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.39	0.41	0.39	0.41	320,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.69	0.69	0.66	0.66	2,250,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78	450,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.39	0.4	14,290,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.45	0.51	0.4	0.5	440,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.32	0.33	0.32	0.32	1,180,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
A Brown Company Inc.	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.64	20,000
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.42	1.42	1.42	1.42	100,000
Macondray Plastics Inc.	7.4	7.4	7.3	7.3	5,000
Music Corp.	3.25	3.3	3.25	3.3	161,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.81	0.81	0.81	0.81	450,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	410,000
Reynolds Philippine Corp.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	100,000
Philippine Seven Corp.	7	7	7	7	400,000
Central Azucar Don Pedro	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.97	20,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	12	12.5	12	12.25	534,800
Steniel Manufacturing	0.37	0.6	0.37	0.6	290,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.66	0.66	0.65	0.65	2,010,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.75	0.75	0.71	0.71	3,350,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.7	0.74	0.7	0.74	5,940,000
Manila Jockey Club	17	17	17	17	54,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	110,000
Philippine Racing Club	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	5,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp (Pdr)	50.5	50.5	50	50.5	919,200
Equitable PCI Bank-War	4.65	4.65	4.05	4.35	150,000
Jollibee Warrants	11.25	11.75	11.25	11.75	15,200
Omico Corp. Warrant	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	78,000,000
Waterfront Phils-Warrant	0.0775	0.0775	0.0725	0.0725	1,000,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	6.7	6.8	6.6	6.6	5,056,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.36	0.36	190,000
Cityland Development Corp	3	3	3	3	2,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.34	0.34	1,340,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	240,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.44	0.44	0.43	0.44	2,800,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	40,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	3	3.05	2.9	2.9	12,156,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.048	0.0525	0.048	0.0525	3,300,000
Gotesco Land Inc.B	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	1,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215	10,000
City & Land Developers	1.5	2.1	1.5	2.1	1,102,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	70,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.4	0.41	310,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	2,000,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	2.24	2.28	2.22	2.22	62,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	10,000
SM Development Corp.	0.95	0.97	0.95	0.97	200,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.2	7.2	7.1	7.1	3,313,000
Universal Rightfield Prop	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	700,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	1,000,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	15,000,000
Itogon-Suyoc Mines A	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	1,300,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.2	0.21	0.2	0.21	390,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	200,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.007	0.0075	0.007	0.007	39,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	73,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0048	0.0048	0.0048	0.0048	250,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	1,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.215	0.24	0.215	0.24	50,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	3,300,000
Interport Res.	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	10,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	10,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.006	0.006	0.0055	0.0055	177,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0055	0.006	0.0055	0.006	104,000,000
Pacifica	0.019	0.019	0.018	0.018	5,000,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.115	100,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	50,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	50,000
Composite	1,673.95DOWN	15.96			

NO. OF ADVANCES: 31; NO. OF DECLINES: 65; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 47; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 143; NO. OF TRADES: 2,873

CURRENCIES

Feb. 19, 2000 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.094691	1.000000	47.5500
Japan	Yen	0.009457	0.008639	0.4108
United Kingdom	Pound	1.584018	1.447000	68.8049
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.140361	0.128220	6.0969
Switzerland	Franc	0.652767	0.596303	28.3542
Canada	Dollar	0.710839	0.649351	30.8766
Singapore	Dollar	0.629494	0.575043	27.3433
Australia	Dollar	0.580799	0.530560	25.2281
Bahrain	Dinar	2.903843	2.652661	126.1340
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.291910	0.266660	12.6797
Brunei	Dollar	0.626432	0.572246	27.2103
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000114	0.000104	0.0049
Thailand	Baht	0.025788	0.023557	1.1201
UAE	Dirham	0.298078	0.272294	12.9476
Korea	Won	0.000881	0.000805	0.0383
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.913500	43.4369
Germany	Mark	0.511292	0.467065	22.2089
France	Franc	0.152450	0.139262	6.6219
Netherlands	Guilder	0.453780	0.414528	19.7108
Austria	Schilling	0.072673	0.066387	3.1567
Belgium	Franc	0.024789	0.022645	1.0768
Italy	Lire	0.000517	0.000472	0.0224
Finland	Markka	0.168188	0.153640	7.3056
Portugal	Escudo	0.004989	0.004557	0.2167
Spain	Peseta	0.006010	0.00549	0.2610
Luxemburg	Franc	0.024789	0.022645	1.0768
Ireland	Punt	1.269738	1.159906	55.1535

Southeast Asian auto sales rise 46% in 2000

SINGAPORE—New vehicle sales in Southeast Asia's four key markets rose 46.5 percent in 2000 over the previous year but were expected to weaken this year as political uncertainty takes its toll, industry monitors said yesterday.

The number of new vehicles sold last year in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand totaled 989,884 units, up from 676,765 in 1999, marketing strategy company Automotive Resources Asia said in its latest report.

Falling sales in Indonesia and Malaysia in December failed to dampen overall growth, it said.

December sales in Indonesia declined 19 percent from the previous month, while vehicle sales in Malaysia were down by 10 percent in the same period.

For the year overall, however, Indonesia posted the most dramatic rise in sales, from 94,474 units in 1999 to 300,573 units last year—a whopping 218-percent increase.

Another industry watcher, MotorBusiness-Asia.com, said in a separate report the more than three-fold increase in car sales in Indonesia showed that Indonesian consumers "have evidently built up a strong tolerance to political instability."

ARA said Thailand sales rose 20 percent on the year to 262,189 units, while Malaysian annual sales ended the year 19 percent higher at 343,173 units sold. The Philippines saw sales rising 13 percent to 83,949.

"There is a great deal of nervousness in each of the Asean markets," said ARA executive director John Bonnell, referring to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

"As a reslt, we are looking for a weakening of sales in the coming months, though nothing drastic," he said.

MotorBusiness-Asia.com said in a report it was "very cautious" on the outlook for new vehicle sales in Indonesia.

"The political instability looks to be intensifying, with the leadership crisis being a big potential source of social unrest and a lack of coherent economic management," it said.

It forecast a contraction of 8.4 percent in new vehicle sales for Indonesia this year, "but this is provided there is not a serious deterioration of the political environment."

A moderate growth is forecast in 2002 "provided that the current political and social problems do not escalate," it added.

Japan's Toyota remains the leader for the region, with a 20-percent share of the market, followed by Malaysia's Proton with 18 percent and Mitsubishi with 12 percent. *AFP*

OPTIMISTIC ASSESSMENT

G-7 rules out global recession

PALERMO, Italy—Finance ministers and central bankers from the Group of Seven major industrial nations said the global economy would avoid a recession, even as they called on the United States and Japan to do more to ensure expansion.

"Global growth will be mainly good this year though somewhat lower than we expected" when the G-7 ministers met last September in Prague, said Italian Treasury Minister Vincenzo Visco, who hosted the G-7 meeting.

American demand for products from Asia and Europe has cooled along with the US economy. The comments suggest the G-7 is not worried that the slowdown and a shrinking Japanese economy will pull down the rest of the world.

"They're probably right in the short term at least," said Andrew Milligan, head of strategy at Standard Life Investments in Edinburgh, Scotland, which manages 80 billion pounds ($117 billion) in assets. "It's clear that the US will recover in the second half of the year."

Currencies, usually a major topic for the G-7, received only a brief mention in the statement released after the meeting in Sicily, suggesting the world's economic chieftains did not see the relative values of the yen, euro and dollar threatening growth.

In their statement, the ministers "reiterated our view that exchange rates among major currencies should reflect economic fundamentals."

They pledged to "continue to monitor developments closely and to cooperate in exchange markets as appropriate," language almost identical to that of past G-7 communiqués.

Although growth in the United States had slowed, the ministers and central bankers offered an upbeat assessment of prospects for the world's largest economy.

"We agreed that the fundamentals for sustained growth remain in place," Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill said.

The International Monetary Fund told G-7 officials that it now expected the US economy to grow 1.7 percent this year, down from an earlier forecast of 3.2 percent made in September. The world economy would probably expand 3.4 percent compared with the September estimate of 4.2 percent.

The G-7 called on American policymakers to use monetary and fiscal policy to boost growth, implicitly offering support for lower interest rates and tax cuts in the United States.

At the same time, the ministers warned neither should be overdone, calling on US officials to preserve "budgetary restraint and price stability." *Bloomberg*

Tax havens seek deadline withdrawal

AUCKLAND—Pacific tax haven nations threatened with severe international sanctions demanded a deadline for them to clean up their operations be withdrawn, the Pacific Forum Secretariat said yesterday.

The forum told a meeting in Tokyo last week that if the deadline could not be withdrawn, it should at least be postponed as a sign of good faith, the secretariat said in a statement.

Fifteen countries, cited by the 29-nation Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development as "non-cooperating nations," face a July 31 deadline.

Some of the nations have already experienced harsh measures. Nauru, which has been accused of providing more than 400 banks registered to a single mail box to launder Russian Mafia money, and Niue, which has given a Panamanian law firm the right to run its tax haven, have both been isolated from the world banking systems.

Cook Islands, Nauru, Niue, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu, which operate tax havens, attended the Tokyo meeting, which was hosted by the Japanese government and the OECD.

Four of them, Cooks, Nauru, Niue and Marshalls, along with the Bahamas, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Israel, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Panama, the Philippines, Russia, St. Kitts and Nevis and St. Vincent and the Grenadines have been declared uncooperative.

The forum said offshore financial centers contributed as much as 8 to 10 percent of gross domestic product in these small, developing Pacific nations and their operations were threatened by the OECD deadline.

"The centers support government expenditure across all sectors, employment, activities of related industries, and the long-term economic growth of these small nations," the statement said.

Implementation of defensive measures by the OECD would lead to greater reliance on aid, the forum said, adding that the Pacific group attended the Tokyo workshop "to recommit to good faith multilateral dialogue." *AFP*

Bridge gets interim financing

NEW YORK—Bridge Information Systems Inc. has filed a voluntary petition to reorganize under Chapter 11 of the US Bankruptcy Code, mooting an involuntary position filed by Highland Capital Management.

Protection under Chapter 11 ensures that Bridge will continue to operate in the ordinary course of business while its management seeks outside investment in the company and finalizes a reorganization plan to reduce outstanding debts.

Welsh, Carson, Anderson & Stowe, Bridge's largest shareholder, intends to submit a bid for the company as part of the reorganization proceedings. Bridge is also retaining an investment banker to evaluate proposals from other third party bidders.

"Bridge has an excellent franchise. We support the decision by the board and management to proceed with the sale process through Chapter 11, and we intend to submit a bid for the Company in its entirety," a spokesman for Welsh Carson said.

Bridge said as part of its filing, it obtained debtor-in-possession financing from its senior lender group to provide working capital during the reorganization proceeding.

A spokesman for the steering committee of Bridge's bank lenders said, "We concur with the company's decision to utilize the Chapter 11 process to implement a reorganization, and we support the company's efforts to achieve a debt restructuring."

The company earlier announced an agreement in principle with its creditors and Welsh Carson to implement a recapitalization and debt restructuring by filing a pre-packaged plan of reorganization under Chapter 11. Bridge said the parties to that agreement elected not to enter into a definitive agreement regarding a pre-packaged filing and that Bridge would instead proceed with a normal Chapter 11 reorganization.

GM dethroned as largest US company

DETROIT—General Motors Corp., once the sterling symbol of corporate America, has lost its crown as the largest US company for the first time in years to an upstart retailer from Arkansas and a new giant in the oil world.

With sales totaling $183.3 billion in 2000, GM has fallen behind Exxon-Mobil Corp.'s $232.7 billion and Wal-Mart Stores Inc., which is expected to report sales in excess of $190 billion when it releases financial results this week.

Since Fortune magazine began its Fortune 500 list of top US companies in 1954, GM has taken the top spot 36 times, only losing the position to Exxon in 1974-76 and 1979-84 when oil prices spiked higher.

This year, GM could, for the first time, fall to third place on the annual Fortune list, to be published in the April 16 edition. Because Fortune adjusts the revenue figures by excluding excise taxes and adding revenues from other sources such as discontinued operations, the final list will not be determined until the issue is released in early April.

Should GM lose first place on the Fortune list, as is likely, it may never recover the title, analysts say.

"It's a fairly mature industry," said analyst Saul Rubin of Wall Street broker UBS Warburg. "The auto companies like to point out that they have growing parts of the market in other parts of the world. At the end of the day, this is pretty peripheral."

GM has been touting its growing presence in emerging markets such as China and Russia. But in its core US market, the automaker lost share last year to European and Asian automakers. *Reuters*

Oracle forms new online community

HONG KONG—Oracle Systems Hong Kong Ltd., a wholly owned subsidiary of Oracle Corp., has launched Oracle VentureNetwork, a global, online community created to help entrepreneurs and early-stage ventures build and successfully develop new businesses.

Oracle VentureNetwork provides entrepreneurs with access to one global source of information and resources to help them quickly develop and grow their ideas into businesses.

Oracle VentureNetwork also offers an unprecedented online forum for these entrepreneurs to share and exchange ideas, access self-service applications to create a business plan online, identify reputable firms who can offer relevant services to technology start-ups, and provide access to investors who will review and potentially finance interesting business ideas—even during difficult economic conditions and seesawing stock markets.

With Oracle VentureNetwork, members can easily find out what is happening in the industry that is relevant to online ventures and participate in open chat forums for discussions and sharing of ideas.

Oracle VentureNetwork is offered free of charge to participating entrepreneurs and emerging companies.

COUNTRY SHARES

As of February 20, 2001

	BUYING	SELLING
ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB A	1,750,000	-
BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	750,000	-
CAMP JOHN HAY	-	350,000
CANYON WOODS	-	Please call
CAPITOL HILLS	120,000	125,000
CELEBRITY SPORTS	200,000	215,000
CLUB FILIPINO	300,000	350,000
EAGLE RIDGE A/B*/C**	380,000	400,000/500,000*/700,000**
EVERCREST	-	150,000
FANTASY WORLD	-	Please call
FONTANA D/C*/B**	120,000*	92,500/150,000*/280,000**
FOREST HILLS A/B*/C**	290,000	300,000/420,000*/450,000**
MAKATI SPORTS A/B*	400,000	415,000/625,000*
MT. MALARAYAT A/C (with lot)*	400,000	425,000/2.0 M*
MANILA POLO CLUB	2,900,000	Please call
MANILA SOUTHWOODS A/B*	850,000/900,000*	-
METROPOLITAN A/B*	160,000/160,000*	180,000
MIMOSA IND./CORP.*	200,000/350,000*	240,000/550,000*
ORCHARD A/B*/C**	300,000/600,000**	330,000/425,000*
PHILIPPINE COLUMBIAN	80,000	90,000
PUERTO AZUL A/B*	130,000	140,000/Please call*
QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	230,000	250,000
RIVIERA A/B*	280,000	310,000/420,000*
ROYALE TAGAYTAY A/B*	-	130,000/150,000*
SHERWOOD HILLS A/B*C**	250,000	275,000/350,000*/450,000**
SUBIC BAY IND/CORP	Please call	Please call
TAT FILIPINAS GOLF A/B*	300,000	350,000/550,000*
TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS CC	500,000	525,000
TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS GOLF	1,100,000	-
TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	850,000	900,000
VALLE VERDE IND.	180,000	190,000
VALLEY GOLF	330,000	-
WACK WACK	8.0M	-

Available Lessors for Playing Rights: Alabang, Calatagan, Camp John Hay, Canlubang, Canyon Woods, Celebrity, Eagleridge, Eastridge, Forest Hills, Makati Sports, Malarayat, Orchard, Riviera, Sta Elena, Southwoods, Tagaytay Highlands and Midlands, Valley Golf, Wack Wack (low price), Rockwell Condominium and Others

Need Lessors for Playing Rights: Eastridge B, Punta Fuego, Rockwell, Sherwood B

Selling: Villas, Belleview, Pinecrest and Woodlands in Tagaytay Highlands and Orchard Townhouse (Terms or Rent), Pacific Plaza (3 bedrooms), and Ponte de Salcedo (3 bedrooms)

Lots: Eagleridge, Forest Hills, Punta Fuego, Royale Tagaytay and Southwoods

Buying: Riviera Lots and Southwoods Phase 2

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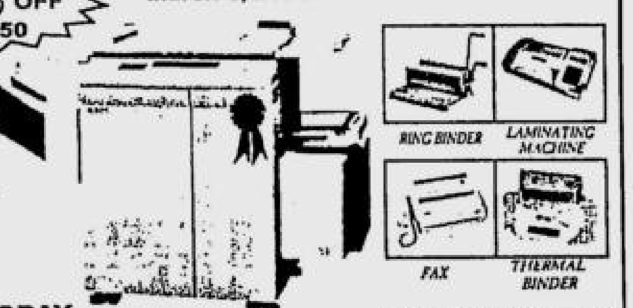

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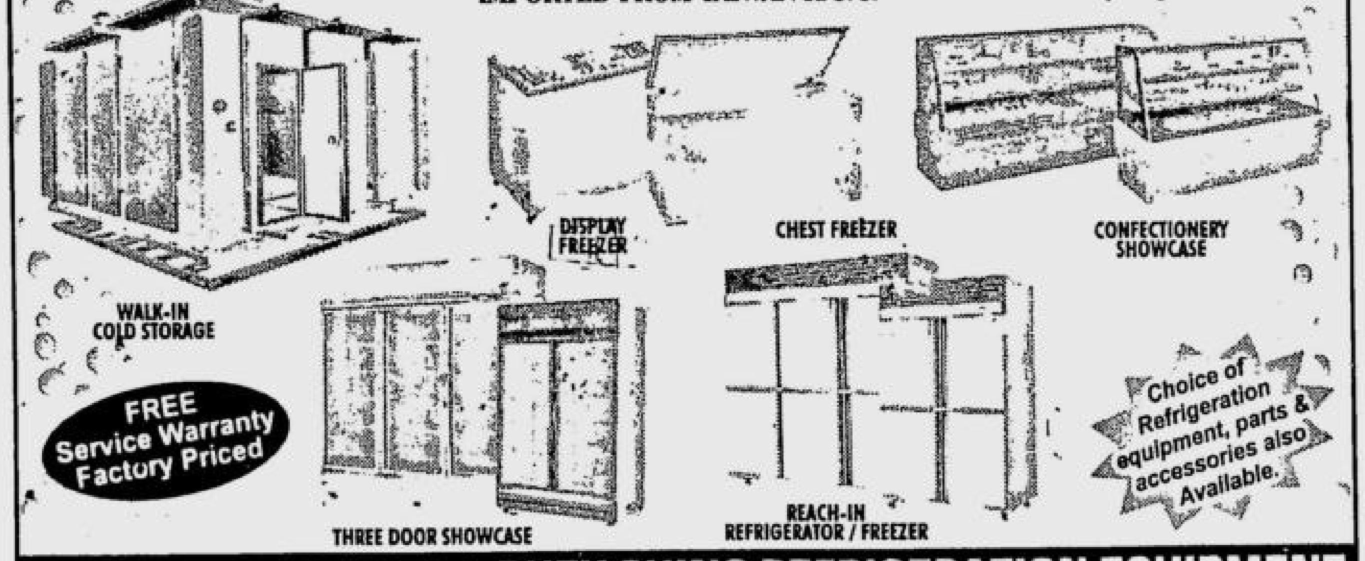

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LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late **ALICIA B. GOMEZ** was extra-judicially partitioned by and among her heirs as per Doc. 45 Pg. 10 Book XLV Series of 2001 before Notary Public Renan R. Osero of Makati City and Doc 007478 Series of 2000 before Notary Public Angelina T. Santos of New Jersey, USA and Consul Joseph Gerard B. Angeles of New York, NY USA
(PDI-Feb. 6, 13 & 20, 2001)

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JOB ONLINE

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Cagayan
Municipality of Amulung
OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL MAYOR

INVITATION TO BID

The Municipal Government of Amulung with principal office address at Centro, Amulung, Cagayan, invites all interested persons or entities to participate in the bidding for the purchase of two (2) units Reconditioned Japan: Isuzu DT preferably 10 PCI. 330 HP, 20 tons gross weight capacity (10 Wheeler) and one (1) unit Reconditioned Japan: Isuzu DT preferably 6GBI, 10 tons gross weight capacity (6 Wheeler). The public bidding shall be held at the Office of the Municipal Mayor at Centro, Amulung, Cagayan or at the DILG Central Office at Cubao, Quezon City on February 26, 2001 at 9:00 o'clock in the morning.

All interested persons or entities are to submit to the Office of the Municipal Mayor not later February 23, 2001 at 10:00 o'clock in the morning, vital documents necessary for pre-qualification to be conducted by the Municipal PBAC on the same day.

All pre-qualified prospective bidders are to submit their sealed proposals in two (2) copies to the PBAC not later than the date and time and at the place of public bidding above-mentioned. Proposals must be accompanied with a proposal bond in the form of cash, certified or manager's check, or bank draft, or any combination hereof payable to the Municipal Treasurer of Amulung, in the amount of 5% of the bid proposal, and Two Hundred pesos (200.00) as bidder's fee.

The right is reserved to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality thereon or to accept such bids as may be considered advantageous to the government.

All communications relative to this invitation must be addressed to the Office of the Municipal Mayor at Amulung, Cagayan.

Amulung, Cagayan, February 12, 2001.

(Sgd.) **NICANOR C. DE LEON**
Municipal Mayor/PBAC Chairman

(PDI--Feb. 16, 18 & 20, 2001)

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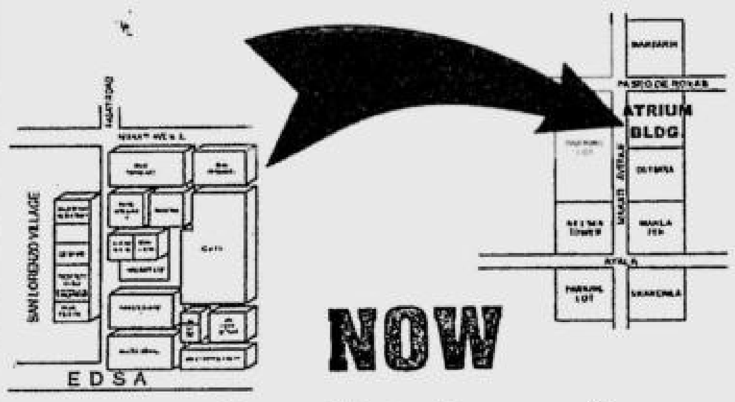

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By BONG BARRAMEDA

Writing direction

Q. Why do we write from left to right and not the other way around?

A. In olden times writing was done by inscribing pictures on small, clay tablets with a pointed instrument. The first of these tablets were small enough to be held in the palm of the hand, and in this position, it was natural for the writer to make the pictures one under the other, from top to bottom. Eventually, however, the tablets grew in length until they could no longer be held in the hand, but had to be laid along the forearm. In this position, the pictures that had previously been written from top to bottom were now most conveniently written from left to right. By the time the pictures evolved into letters, the habit of left-to-right writing had become firmly established.

For the Record. The oldest letter in the English alphabet is "O," which has remained unchanged in shape since its adoption in the Phoenician alphabet, which appeared around 1,300 B.C. and became the earliest forerunner of the modern English alphabet. The newest letters are "J" and "V," which were added to the English alphabet in the 17th century; originally, they were used only as variants of "I" and "U."

Quote in the Act. At the conclusion of the premier of George Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man* the audience was cheering wildly as the Irish author took a curtain call. During a lull in the applause, someone called out in stentorian tones, "Shaw, your play stinks!" There was a horrified moment of silence, then Shaw exclaimed, "Sir, I quite agree with you, but what are we two against so many?"

WORD WATCH

Pikon : from the Spanish *picon*, "jest."

PDI – February 20, 2001

Republic of the Philippines
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
East Avenue Diliman, Quezon City
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E-mail:sssemail@info.com.ph • Web site http://www.sss.gov.ph

Visit the SSS website for Bid Invitations

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

NON-LINEAR VIDEO EDITING SYSTEM AND OTHER EQUIPMENT

The SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM is inviting bidders for the purchase of Non-linear Video Editing System and other equipment.

This is a re-publication.

List of pre-qualification requirements must be obtained from the PBAC Secretariat, 6th Floor, SSS Main Building, East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City with telephone numbers 922-2991 and 920-6401 local 2379/2380. The deadline of submission of pre-qualification documents is on **27 February 2001** at the same address.

The SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, to waive any formality or technicality, and to award to any bidder whose proposal is deemed most advantageous to the System. The SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM neither assumes any obligation for any loss whatsoever that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of their respective bids, nor does the System guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) **HORACIO T. TEMPLO**
Executive Vice-President
& Chairman, Pre-qualification,
Bidding & Award Committee

(PDI – Feb. 20, 2001)

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"Eternal life will swallow up that which can die. God made us for this very reason and He has given us the Spirit as a guarantee that we will live again.

2 Corinthians 5:4-5

In Loving Memory
of
MAURA NILL JACINTO

on the 1st Anniversary of her rebirth to Eternal Life on February 20, 2000.

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Alabang ------------------- 6:30 PM
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Makati --------------------- 7:00 PM

"In Christ all shall me made alive..."
Corinthians 15:22

CORAZON DAYRIT-de los SANTOS

Peacefully joined her husband EMILIANO, and her Creator on February 18, 2001 at the age of 86.

Her loving daughter **Marissa**; son-in-law **Lionel Calo, Jr.**; grandchildren **Lara, Loren** and **Enzo**; sister **Marina Dayrit-Delfin**; sister-in-law **Imelda Katigbak-Dayrit**; relatives and friends request your prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Christ the King Church, Greenmeadows, Quezon City.

Funeral Mass will be on Thursday, February 22, 2001 at 9:00 AM. Cremation will follow after the Mass.

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Brighter outlook awaiting construction industry

A BRIGHTER outlook awaits the local construction and architecture sector as business confidence in the country continues its upsurge to high levels in light of the recent political transition.

This was the prognosis raised by Joseph Ang, founding president of the Worldbex Services International, which is responsible for mounting the Worldbex series of trade shows for the past six years and the Worldbex seminars for three years now.

Ang said the continuous efforts to build up the economy under the Macapagal administration would further boost the advancement of the construction industry since these would entail the building of additional infrastructures.

The construction of more roads, bridges, power stations, transmission lines, airports and ports will definitely mean higher demand for construction materials and services in the Philippines, he stressed.

Prediction

In his speech at the Worldbex 2000, European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines vice president Henry Schumacher predicted that the local construction will flourish given the great opportunities in the Philippines, which include opening up the retail trade for foreign investors.

This is now evidenced by the establishment of new malls, super or hyper markets, power plants and other structures.

Also, an increasing number of IT (information technology) parks have been put up in different parts of the country on account of the rapid growth of the IT sector, thereby greatly benefiting the construction firms.

Ang said Worldbex 2001 has two major events: the 6th Philippine World Building and Construction Exposition on March 14 to 18 at the World Trade Center in Pasay City and the 3rd Worldbex Seminars on March 15 and 16 at the Century Park Hotel.

The seminars will feature a power-packed team of 10 global experts in construction, architecture and allied industries while the exposition will feature the best technologies, products and services from around the world, Ang said.

Worldbex 2001 exhibition promises to be the biggest ever construction exposition in the country in terms of foreign participation. Already, more than 400 exhibitors from the United States, Europe, Asia, Canada, South America, Africa and Australia have shown keen interest to participate, Ang said.

Additionally, 30 large companies from the United States alone are expected to participate in the exhibits.

Experts

Speakers at the seminars are experts in the construction, architectural and allied fields from around the world, who will share their experiences and successes with the participants.

The speakers on the first day are: John Koga, senior associate principal of Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates Inc. of USA; Alfred Abrahamsohn, senior director and chief executive of Bentel Abrahamsohn & partners of South Africa; engineer Ernesto Battad Sr.; Prof. Bruce Etherington of the University of Hawaji; Val Abeng, founding president of the Philippine Association of Building Administrators; Vincent Rowan, partner of Masons International Law (UK); Manfred Adamer, marketing manager of Crystal Architecture of Austria; Joseph Wong of Hong Kong; Dr. Ken Yeang, principal architect of T.R.Hamzah & Yeang of Malaysia; and Stefano Musso, an associate professor of architectural restoration of the University of Genoa, Italy.

Ang said early registrants, or those who will apply for participation before Feb. 28 will be able to avail half rates (of P2,500); for students of architecture, engineering, or interior design the rate is P1,500 and for Worldbex privilege card members and for members of accredited construction professional associations, P4,000.

The twin events are organized by WSI in cooperation with the Philippine Institute of Interior Designers, Filipino Professional Architects, the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines and the US Commercial Service. Worldbex 2001 also enjoys the support of 22 local industry associations and is sponsored by Wilsonart International, Boysen Paints, Eurotiles, American Standard, Mariwasa, Dutch Boy, Nextel, The Brain Computer Corp., Automation and Security Inc., Puriflex Mineral Water Systems, Multi Rich Home Decors, Kopino Corp., HOG, Emerald Vinyl, Davies Paints, Ariston, DHL Worldwide Express, Wizzard Technologies, Café' Puro, and National Bookstore. Donors include Glassworks and Feon Interiors.

LAS PIÑAS LAND ROW

Supreme Court ends Espinosas' 20-year ordeal

THE RECENT landmark ruling of the Supreme Court on the celebrated land dispute in Las Piñas City teaches government lawyers a lesson—not on jurisprudence, but on truth and righteousness.

The SC ruling finally ended the case, but only after it had spanned some 20 years and placed the Espinosas and six other families, including State Properties Corp. (formerly Peltan Development Corp.), at the risk of losing their 99-hectare property to Chinese-owned firm Firestone Ceramics Inc.

The case would have ended earlier when the Supreme Court had invalidated Firestone's title and ruled in favor of original certificate of title (OCT) 4216 on three different occasions.

It was after these rulings that then Solicitor General Raul Goco claimed government ownership of that property in Barangay Tindig na Mangga and questioned the ownership of the said property for the fourth time.

Goco pursued the case, even after two highly respected solicitors general under two previous administrations—Estelito Mendoza and Francisco Chavez—had rejected Firestone's repeated appeal that such a case be filed by the government.

Thus, the Espinosas soon appeared to have become victims of an orchestrated attempt to rob them of their property, which they had bought in 1956 but only upon competent legal advice from the law firm of former senator Ambrosio Padilla.

The Espinosas bought the property from Veronica Gana, the daughter of Juliana Carlos and Lorenzo Gana, its original owners since 1928. Thus from 1956 the Espinosas have been in actual possession of the property, paying its real estate taxes and securing it with a concrete perimeter fence.

The Espinosas have also filed several ejectment cases against intruders until they suddenly found themselves being the ones on the brink of eviction. They were sued and told by Firestone that their titles to the property were fake.

Firestone claimed that the Espinosas' OCT 4216 could not be found in the Registry of Deeds, that Case No. 672 in which the land was decreed was nonexistent and related to a property in Taguig, and that there was no survey plan.

Shocked' lawyer Sabino Padilla Jr. of the Espinosa family went to the Registry of Deeds of Pasig to verify. He found OCTs 4215 and 4217 but not 4216.

"But when you look closely at the book between OCTs 4215 and 4217, you will notice the remnants of the missing title obviously cut with a very fine blade or knife. And so I confronted the vault keeper, who pointed to the corner of the vault, and voila! There, I found the remains of what appeared to be a pre-war title. After an hour of making a jigsaw puzzle emerged the original OCT 4216 and right then and there I asked the Register of Deeds to have it photocopied and certified that it was there in the records," Padilla explained.

In almost similar fashion, Padilla found all the other pieces of evidence that later proved Firestone Ceramics and the OSG wrong.

"Indeed, what happened to the Espinosas did not just happen by accident," Padilla concluded. He had told the Supreme Court en banc that there were "criminal minds planning all of these--the loss of the OCT, the loss of the decree, the certification that there is no survey plan."

"These did not happen by accident, Your Honor," Padilla told the Supreme Court.

Thus, after the Supreme Court en banc had issued its final ruling in favor of the Espinosas, lawyer Eduardo Lizares expressed hope that the solicitor general under the Macapagal administration and his successors would learn from the mistake of their predecessors.

P24.6-B LRT-1 extension to put Cavite back at forefront of industrialization

MALIKSI

CAVITEÑOS are looking forward to the start of the construction of the P24.6-billion Light Railway Transit-1 Extension to their province, a joint-venture project that Rep. Ayong Maliksi said would put Cavite back at the forefront of industrialization in the country.

Cavite was not originally covered by the memorandum of agreement (MOA) signed on Nov. 16, 1997 between the government-owned and -controlled Light Rail Transit Authority and Canada-based SNC Lavalin International Inc.

That MOA, Maliksi said, considered the extension of the existing LRT system from... "Baclaran Station southward to service the surrounding built-up areas such as the cities of Pasay, Las Piñas and Parañaque" only.

Prime mover

Aware that a good mass transport system is a prerequisite to the continued economic development of an area, Maliksi, who was serving as mayor of Imus at the time, pushed hard for the inclusion of Cavite in the project for which the government would spend nothing.

"I wrote the different government departments and agencies involved n the project and explained how it would benefit my province in particular and the country in general," said the congressman from Cavite's second district. "I personally met with their officials and pleaded my case. I'm glad my effort paid off."

Signed on March 20, 2000, the project, according to Maliksi, will now extend to as far as Dasmariñas, Cavite, in three phases. Phase I will link Baclaran to Bacoor, a distance of 12 kilometers; phase 2 will connect Bacoor to Imus in a 4-km route; and phase 3 will bridge the 11-km distance between Imus and Dasmariñas.

Maliksi said the LRT-1 Extension projects would be completed by Dec. 31, 2005.

Reports said the coastal line would be serviced by 14 trains made up of 14 air-conditioned cars each. Each car can accommodate 550 passengers.

Ease traffic congestion

Preliminary studies showed that nearly one million daily trips are made through the coastal corridor, and indicated that the LRT-1 Extension "could potentially serve up to 560,000 passengers daily in the opening year." The load, according to the same studies, could increase to over 650, passengers daily in five to 10 years.

Maliksi said the project, when fully operational, would bring substantial social and economic benefits to the covered areas and play a pivotal role in sustaining growth and supporting future development plans.

To Caviteños and other motorists using the coastal route, the extension project, Maliksi said, would directly translate as the long-wanted solution to the heavy traffic congestion that happens almost daily in that stretch by Manila Bay.

Although his political rivals and critics were quick to downplay the major role taken by Maliksi in bringing about the inclusion of Cavite in the LRT-1Extension project, Canadian Ambassador John H. Treleaven, in a letter dated Oct. 14, 1999, has solicited his recommendation for the project.

Dev't projects

Apart from pushing hard for the LRT-1 Extension project, Maliksi was also largely responsible for the approval by government of P1-billion worth of road and resettlement development projects. These include the construction of the Daang Hari Aguinaldo Highway-Molino, Bacoor road with a budget of P533.8 million, P80 million of which was already released, concreting of the Gen. Trias-Manggahan, Amadeo-Tagaytay road with a budget of P113 million of which P25 million was already released by the Department of Public Works and Highways and another P35 million released by the Bureau of Maintenance; repair of the Bucandala-Carsadang Bago Pag-asa diversion road in Imus with a budget of P51.62 million; and the development of three resettlement areas in Dasmariñas, Gen. Mariano Alvarez and Silang with a combined budget of P65 million.

In joint efforts with the two other Cavite representatives, Del Abaya and Polly Beratio, Maliksi was also credited with the government approval of the construction of US$600-million Manila-Cavite coastal road.

Following the approval of the Philippine Estate Authority and the Toll Regulatory Board to transfer the project to another contractor, the Philippine Coastal Corp., the previous administration last year had immediately ordered to start implementing phase 1 of the project.

Phase 1 covers extension of the coastal road from Barangay Longos, Bacoor to Noveleta; phase 2 from Bacoor to Baclaran; and phase 3 from Baclaran to the South Expressway and C-5 road.

WELL-DESIGNED FAÇADE

The well-designed façade of a Prominence II unit looks like one big manor house. Prominence II in Brentville International at Mamplasan, Laguna, held its open house Sunday. It is only 200 meters from the Mamplasan exit along South Luzon Expressway and just 15 minutes away from Filinvest Corporate City.

New CMP guidelines speed up loan processing

THE NEW guidelines adopted by the national housing agency in charge of urban poor relocation has elicited brisk loan applications for coverage under the community mortgage program.

This was revealed by Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council chair Michael Defensor as he focused the agency's attention on the problem of informal settlers.

The CMP is under the supervision of the National home Mortgage and Finance Corp., of which the HUDCC chair is automatically the board chair.

Under the CMP, the NHMFC provides the funds under which the government purchases lands from private landowners for distribution to informal settlers. The informal settlers pay for the land within a 25-year period.

In March last year, the NHMFC adopted new guidelines expanding the coverage of the CMP to cover those living in road right-of-way and those affected by government infrastructure projects.

To boost the CMP coverage and encourage more CMP loan applications due to the backlog in availment of the program's accumulated funds, the HUDCC established express lanes to process new applications.

The expenses for off-site relocation of informal settlers living near the government infrastructure projects, under the new guidelines, will be borne by the government agency undertaking the infrastructure projects.

Defensor said the NHMFC is currently processing the loan applications amounting to some P855 million. This amount includes some P469 million worth of loans for 55 projects under the old loan inventory for off-site projects.

Defensor said it is also the policy of the Macapagal-Arroyo administration to speed up the relocation of informal settlers living in danger areas and assure shelter security for them.

Under the new guidelines, some P386 million worth of new loan applications to cover 42 projects are in the process of being approved, Defensor said.

Expected to benefit from the new loan applications are 21,247 informal settler families.

Fully furnished houses at Cottonwood Heights

CROWN Asia reasserts its position as the market leader in middle-income housing with the availability of fully furnished units for buyers at Cottonwood Heights, its premiere subdivision in Antipolo City.

"Crown Asia is making these tastefully furnished units available at Cottonwood Heights to give our customers a wider range of choices for their future home," said Crown Asia chief executive officer Marcelino C. Mendoza.

Cottonwood Heights is a master-planned community that captures the setting of the American countryside in its ambience—from the design of the houses to the carefully placed parks and lush flora and trees, which were laid out to complement the natural greenery of Antipolo City. It is also for healthy living with basketball and tennis courts, clubhouse and tree-lined roads perfect for jogging and brisk walking.

"With these fully furnished houses, we have removed the attendant problems that come with moving into a new home, such as worrying and fretting over what kind of furniture to buy and planning where to place these," Mendoza added.

Professional interior designers Wilmer Lopez, Katrina Adapon and Kathy Maralit carefully selected the furniture that would fit well into the houses in Cottonwood Heights. A survey of current residents provided a gauge into the preference in terms of furnishing and interior design that are typical of Cottonwood Heights' homes.

The fully furnished houses were an offshoot of an exhibit of interior design ideas at the housing estate's clubhouse in September. The interior design exhibit, put up in cooperation with the Cottonwood Heights Homeowners Association, received so much positive response from homeowners and customers that Crown Asia decided to offer fully furnished houses as an option for buyers.

The houses of course had interior creations by the designers featured in the exhibit.

For more information on these fully furnished houses and other house models available at Cottonwood Heights, visit Crown Asia website at http://www.crownasia.com.ph.

Realty federation reveals new head

THE PRIVATE Sector Consultative Council for Shelter has announced the designation of engineer Reynaldo A. Carpio, immediate past president of the National Real Estate Association, as its new chair for the next semester of the year.

The PCCS is a federation of five real estate organizations, consisting of the Builders Alliance Toward Action (Bata), led by Romeo R. Liamzon Jr.; NREA, architect Placido Calma; Organiztion of Socialized Housing Developers of the Philippines, Giovanni J. Olivares; Subdivision and Housing Developers Association, Mariano D. Martinez Jr.; and Women in Shelter and Its Environment (WISE), Carol S. Osteria.

It serves primarily as the consultative body, representing the private real estate practitioners, in helping its government agency counterparts formulate housing policies and in coordinating private sector participation in the implementation of the government shelter program.

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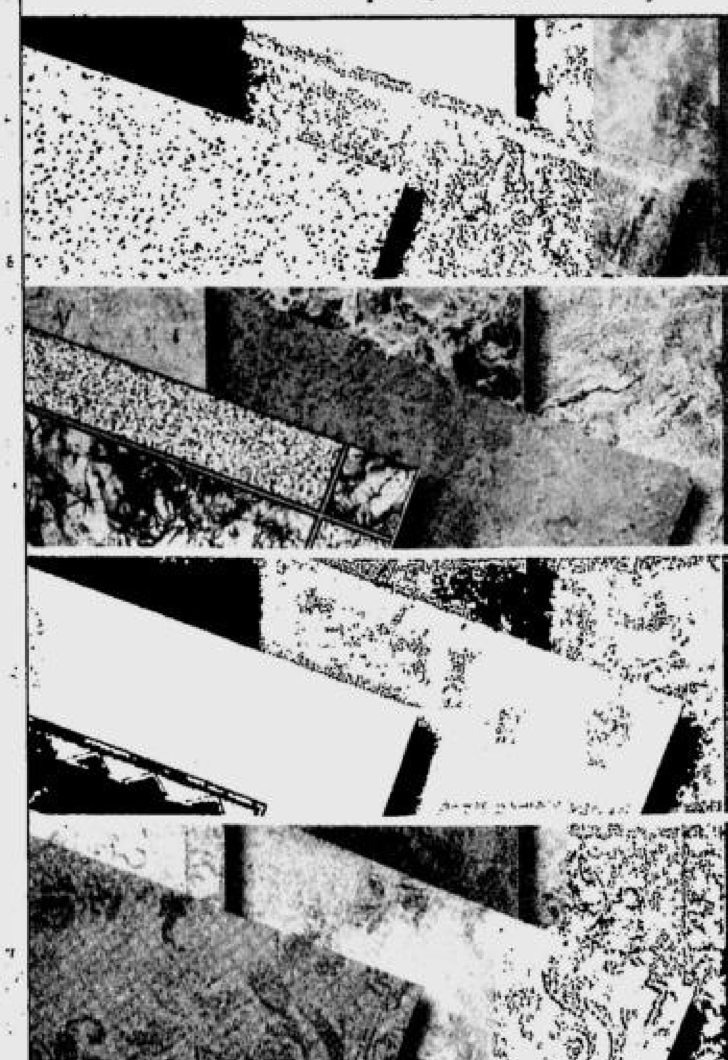

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World-class theme park to open this summer

BY JERRY ESPLANADA

THE 181-HECTARE Central Business District. The 153-ha. Subic Bay Industrial Park. The 70-ha. Subic Techno Park. The 3,800-ha. Redondo Peninsula. The 365-ha. Bataan Techno Park.

Add Ecolandia to the list of key investment sites at the Subic Freeport.

"This is the other phase of Subic and we have started developing it. A nature park that will complement the industrial portion of the Freeport," disclosed Felicito Payumo, chair of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority.

Top attraction

Ocean Adventure, a world-class theme park set to open this summer at the Kamayan Wharf area (near Miracle beach), will be the top attraction of the Freeport's nature hub. The former US Naval Magazine area is reserved for recreational and tourism use under the National Integrated Protected Areas.

The tourist facility, with an initial budget of $6 million (about P286 million), is being developed by the Subic Bay Marine Exploratorium Inc.

The two-hectare marine park will showcase, among others, "interactive entertainment, featuring marine mammals."

"Here, you can swim with killer whales and dolphins and play with the sea lions. Kids and other Freeport visitors can bond with these mammals. A highly educational interaction program awaits them. Other components include an aquarium that will highlight the ecosystem of Subic, from the estuarine river, mangrove and coral reefs to the pellagic and migratory fishes," Payumo said.

Really unique

According to the former Bataan legislator, Ocean Adventure is "different from other theme parks. Its setting, amid the open sea and natural environment, is really unique."

Payumo pointed out, "whether it's Sea World or Ocean Park, their artificial pools use chlorinated water. In the Subic marine park, it is the natural environment. It's as close to the natural habitat as can be."

"That is why, I don't see why some people insist that we close this theme park down. We might as well close down Monterey Aquarium and San Diego Zoo in California, Bronx Zoo in New York, the Night Zafari in Singapore, Ocean Park, Disney in Tokyo and Yokohama and Seaworld USA," he said.

He believes "there is a place for some animals in captivity for scientific, educational and even breeding programs for the benefit of animal species, even mankind."

One component of the program, Payumo noted, "will be the hiring of children of blast and cyanide fishermen in the Subic area. At least, they'll have livelihood, imbibe these values and reach out to those involved in illegal fishing."

Run by pros

Ocean Adventure, he also assured, "is run by professionals."

Tim Desmond, the firm's chair and chief executive officer, "has had a long experience in marine mammal programs. He was the trainer-coordinator of Keiko, the killer whale in the film "Free Willy." He was head of training and live shows at the Marineland of the Pacific. He also served as director of the Beijing Aquarium Marine Mammal Program as well as an adviser at Walt Disney Animal Kingdom.

Ocean Adventure president, John Corcoran, is a 31-year "veteran of the theme park and entertainment industry." He was CEO of Ocean Park in Hong Kong, executive vice president and general manager of Marine World in northern California.

Corcoran also held management positions with the Disney Company, including the start-up of the Walt Disney World Project.

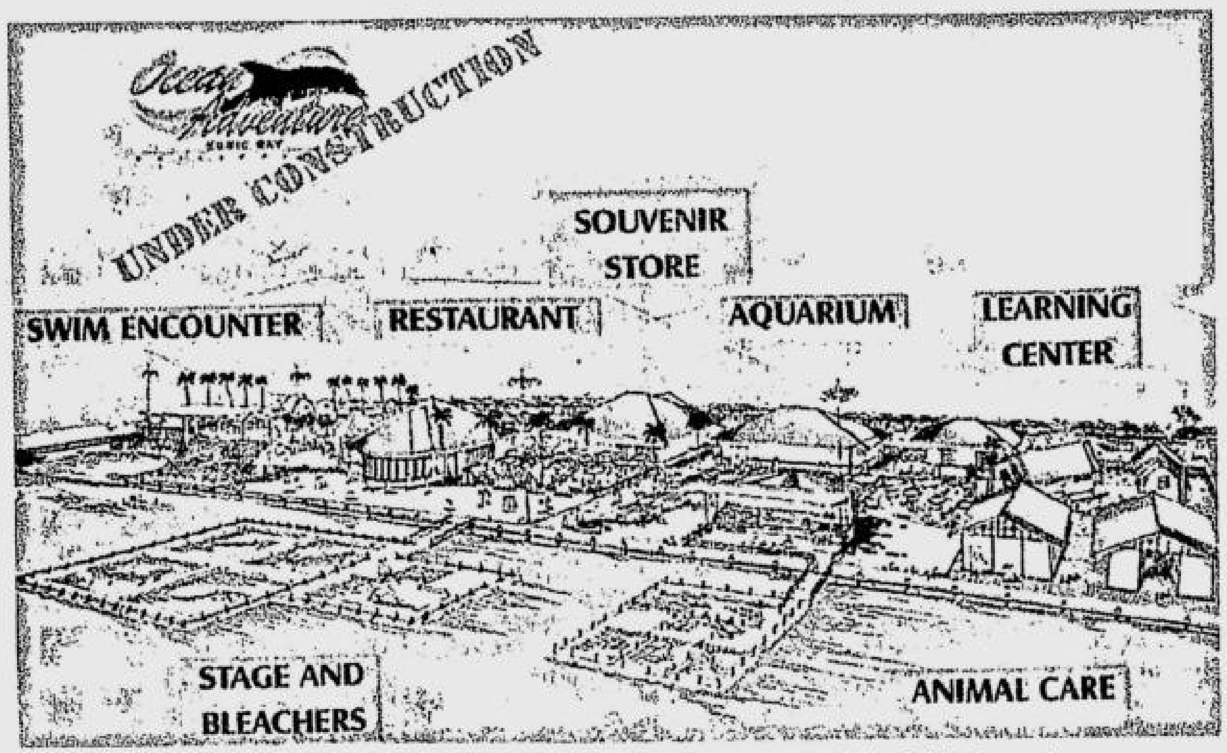
SBMA consultant Disraeli Santiago is the firm's vice president for operations.

Architect Terry Nicholson is the company's vice president for design and construction. He was part of the Windsor Wild Animal Safari Park project in England, Jeddah Sealife Park project in Saudi Arabia, Hardervijk Sealife Park in Holland and Zoo Duisburg in Germany, among others.

Scott Sharpe, marine mammal trainer and marine logistics expert, is Ocean Adventure's director for water operations and logistics while Gail Laule is director for animal behavior.

Next in line is a forest theme park and wildlife sanctuary to be developed within the boundaries of the Freeport's protected forests. "Integrated in the plan is the establishment of tourist facilities like hotels, resorts and shopping areas. Feasibility studies on the forest adventure park, safari and monorail tours over Subic's triple-canopy forests as well as canopy rides are ongoing," Payumo said.

At the same time, he reiterated that "the Freeport is committed to promoting economic growth balanced with measures to ensure environmental protection."



OCEAN Adventure is a 2-hectare theme park at the Kamayan Wharf area of the Subic Freeport.

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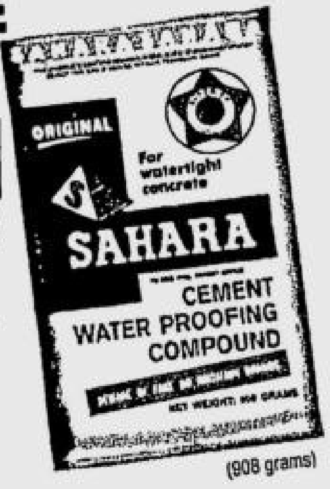

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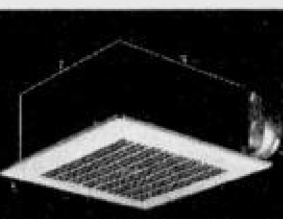

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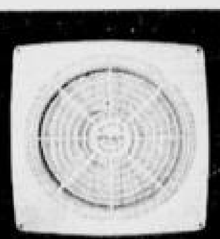

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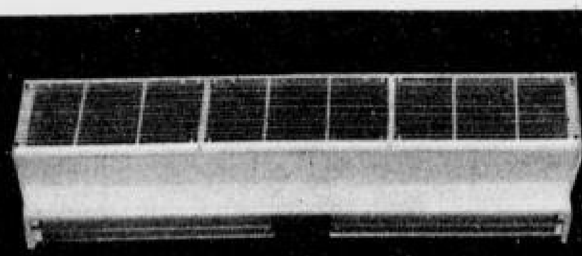

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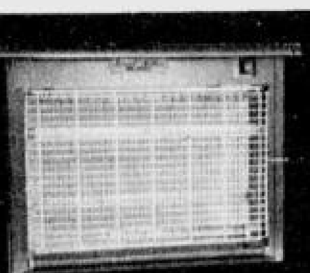

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REAL ESTATE

CESAR D. MANGAWANG, Editor

ARE GOOD TIMES BACK?

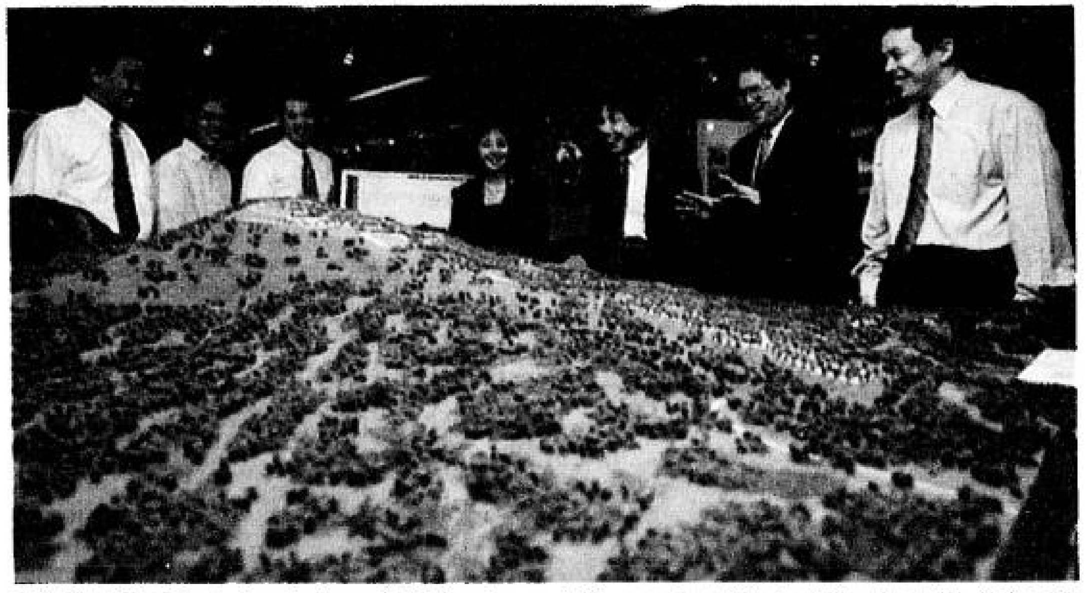
Ayala Land harvests fruits of Edsa 2 euphoria

BY TESSA RELAMPAGOS SALAZAR

COULD this be a sign that good times are ready to roll again in the real estate industry?

Claiming it has started to feel the fruits of last month's "People Power II," real estate giant Ayala Land Inc. hopes the euphoria cascades down to the entire real estate sector so it could eventually pump-prime the economy.

In just after a week of opening, 69 out of 71 introductory units of its upper mid-market community in Quezon City—Montgomery Place—were sold. ALI disclosed it is working double time as it is now running out of inventory.



OFFICIALS of Ayala Land, Greenfield Development Corp. and architectural firm Leandro V. Locsin and Partners view the scale model of Ayala Greenfield Estate clubhouse.

Consisting of 125 homes in its first phase, Montgomery Place is ALI's first residential townhouse project offering for 2001 in Quezon City. Located on E. Rodriguez Street, it is accessible from Araneta Avenue and the New Manila Area. Just last week, the residential development was already teeming with upper middle-class families and Filipino-Chinese executives settling in.

Enthusiastic response

"We never expected such an enthusiastic response from the market. During our first day of opening to brokers, we had to raffle off the numbers so they could all queue. Considering that at that time we haven't come with our full page ads and have not opened to the general public yet," disclosed Ma. Victoria E. Añonuevo, ALI's vice president for sales and marketing services.

Al Legaspi, ALI's assistant vice president for sales and marketing services, said ALI officials were pleasantly surprised with the enthusiastic response that could hopefully signal a continuous recovery.

"We knew it would do well but we didn't know it would do this well. People here buy multiple units, a lot are waiting for more units to come out, that's why we're even fast-tracking successive phases because of the response," he said.

ALI outlines the elements that contributed to the "enthusiastic response." These include people's confidence with the Macapagal administration and the economy; Montgomery's good location, the right product specs and sizes; and affordable payment terms.

"I hope President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo continues her confidence-building in the economy and really do well," said Añonuevo.

Montgomery Place is at the heart of Quezon City, near España, Manila and San Juan. It's a short drive to exclusive schools such as Xavier, La Salle Greenhills, Immaculate Concepcion Academy, St. Joseph's College, Trinity College, and is a stone's throw from St. Luke's Hospital.

Añonuevo said ALI offered affordable payment terms with down payments payable in 12 months and the rest of the payments in 60 months.

"It's been quite a while since we've experienced something like this," said Añonuevo. "We were supposed to open this up in November. Then came the impeachment trial (of then President Estrada). It signals confidence in the economy. Interest rates are going down. There are a lot of factors, I think we got the elements in place."

High-rise sector

Ask if there are still any apprehensions in the real estate sector, Añonuevo said that the oversupply of office spaces and the depleted demands for high-rise office buildings are still a problem.

"Hopefully, when investors come in, new companies would have to be formed so office spaces will also experience a new surge in demand and then together with that the high-rise residential condos," she said.

Añonuevo surmised that foreigners and expats are still on a "wait-and-see" attitude. She stressed that the Philippine real estate industry, together with businesses, should first show signs that it is now confident with the new government and the economy.

Another factor, she said, that could contribute to the "wait-and-see" attitude has been the May 2001 senatorial elections. The elections, said Añonuevo, will be a reflection of the confidence of the Macapagal's administration.

Añonuevo predicted that complete settlement and confidence may come second half of the year.

Meantime, real estate observers were saying the industry takeoff may happen on the first quarter of 2002 when elections are through and questions on the legitimacy of the Macapagal administration are settled.

Nevertheless, Ayala Land stressed that since the Montgomery project has given ALI full confidence, it hopes to go full blast with other pending projects.

Montgomery Place architecture, a corn farmer's story

BY TESSA R. SALAZAR

IT is unlike the usual Mediterranean architecture urban residential developments often flaunt; it is derived from another style—that of American architecture. This is the type of architecture that thrives in the not-so-cold southern United States where corn farmers—or corn cracklers—build two types of houses: the sprawling and the vertical.

A chat with one of the architects of Montgomery revealed that the team chose the vertical type for the townhomes' design: cool, well-ventilated.

"We call it cross-ventilation. Even if width space is limited, it makes up for its height" said architect Marcos R. de Guzman Jr. of Marcos de Guzman Architecture Network.

The American theme also includes panoramic windows, clean architectural lines and spacious interiors. It boasts of a tree-lined entrance and lush landscaping.

Vertical development, he said, is composed essentially of high ceilings and high windows. The sizes of windows and sliding doors in this project were maximized, and the ground floor has had open planning to give future owners freedom to decide on.

The Architecture Network that designed townhouse projects in Cebu, Laguna, Pasig, and Quezon City designed for Montgomery Place four models ranging from 100 sq.m. to 200 sq. m. The townhouses have two to three bedrooms, two car garages, pocket gardens, utility areas, modular kitchen cabinets, provisions for two telephone lines, cable television and options for future expansion.

Interior design, however, was another architectural challenge to be considered, considering townhouses' interiors are smaller than a detached house. ALI chose interior designer Tina Periquet to design the 100-sq.-m. model houses. Periquet stressed the illusion of spaciousness—balancing light and shadow and a neutral palette to dissolve the corners and edges of rooms creating a sense of limited space.

She described strong surface colors, wall moldings, or ornamentation along the room edges that tend to frame a space—clearly defining boundaries. "If you deemphasize the borders, the space will appear to flow beyond its actual confines. Variations of white and cream envelop the space to subtly shift the mood from warm to cool, from calm to stimulating," she said. Periquet described that she made the master bedroom walls "restful shadowy white" and the child's bedroom "glowing with sunlight."

Periquet also described that future unit owners should reduce ornamentations in furniture to fit into the townhouse's limited space.

With 24-hour security, Montgomery Place also boasts of a town hall with a two-story clubhouse, social hall, function rooms, an adult lap pool, a children's pool, and park and playground equipment. Parking space for visitors will never be a problem, said ALI.

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LIFESTYLE
CHELO BANAL-FORMOSO, Editor

Fitness

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ILLUSTRATIONS: STEPH BRAVO

Giving in to impulse is not a wise thing to do, whether it concerns food or other things in life

Weight-control clichés to live by

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Aboitiz Juan

LIKE most everyone else, I have to exercise regularly and eat properly to stay healthy, strong and within my normal weight range. This is something I have to work at every day. I am not naturally strong or slim. I also have a history of bulimia, an eating disorder that involves bingeing and vomiting. There are times when old attitudes and habits come back to haunt me. I have found that it helps to "talk" to myself when the going gets tough. There are certain phrases I repeat to myself (almost like a mantra) to demolish those old thought patterns. I call them weight-control clichés to live by.

I wish I could say I created these clichés but I didn't. I have either borrowed them from weight-loss experts or adapted them from existing clichés that originally had nothing to do with weight control. They may not all work for you. Take what you need and reinvent the rest to suit your needs.

Eat for health most of the time; eat for taste some of the time

In an ideal world, everything that tasted good would be healthy for us. But in the real world, there are many things that are absolutely delicious but are disastrous for our health if we eat them all the time. This is not to say, of course, that only unhealthy things taste good. There are also many things that are both healthy and delectable. The point here is, if you eat for health most of the time and eat for taste only some of the time, you can control your weight but still have your favorite goodies.

Out of sight, out of mind

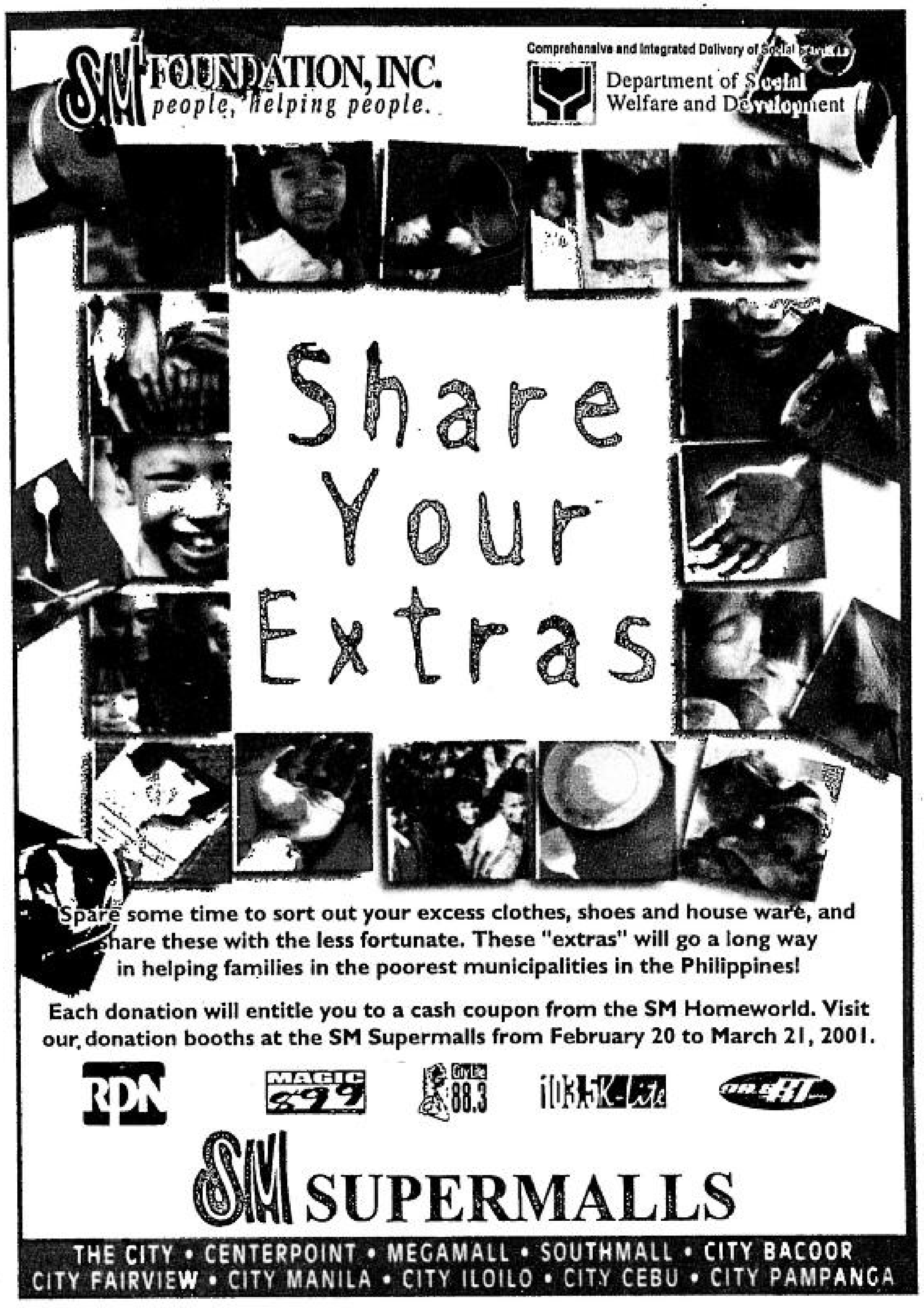
This is one of the tricks that really work for me. I don't keep sweets or junk food in my house. If I don't see the stuff, I won't be tempted. And even if I am tempted, let's say, in the middle of the night, there is nothing in the house for me to munch on except healthy things like fruits. This doesn't mean I am depriving myself because if the craving is really strong, I can always buy my "stuff" (in a small package, of course) at one of those 24-hour convenience stores. However, this rarely happens because it is usually too late to send the driver and I am too lazy to go out myself.

A few years ago, I helped a good friend move into her apartment in the US. Since I wouldn't let her bring home any junk food (both for her sake and mine), she started to lose weight while I lived with her. Believe me, we did have our "fun" moments but they were kept under control by not bringing the temptations home with us.

The 15-minute rule

Dr. Stephen Gullo, psychologist and author of "Thin Tastes Better," says cravings are like a wave. They rise up to a crest and then they eventually come crashing down. If you can ride out the

WEIGHT/ p. C3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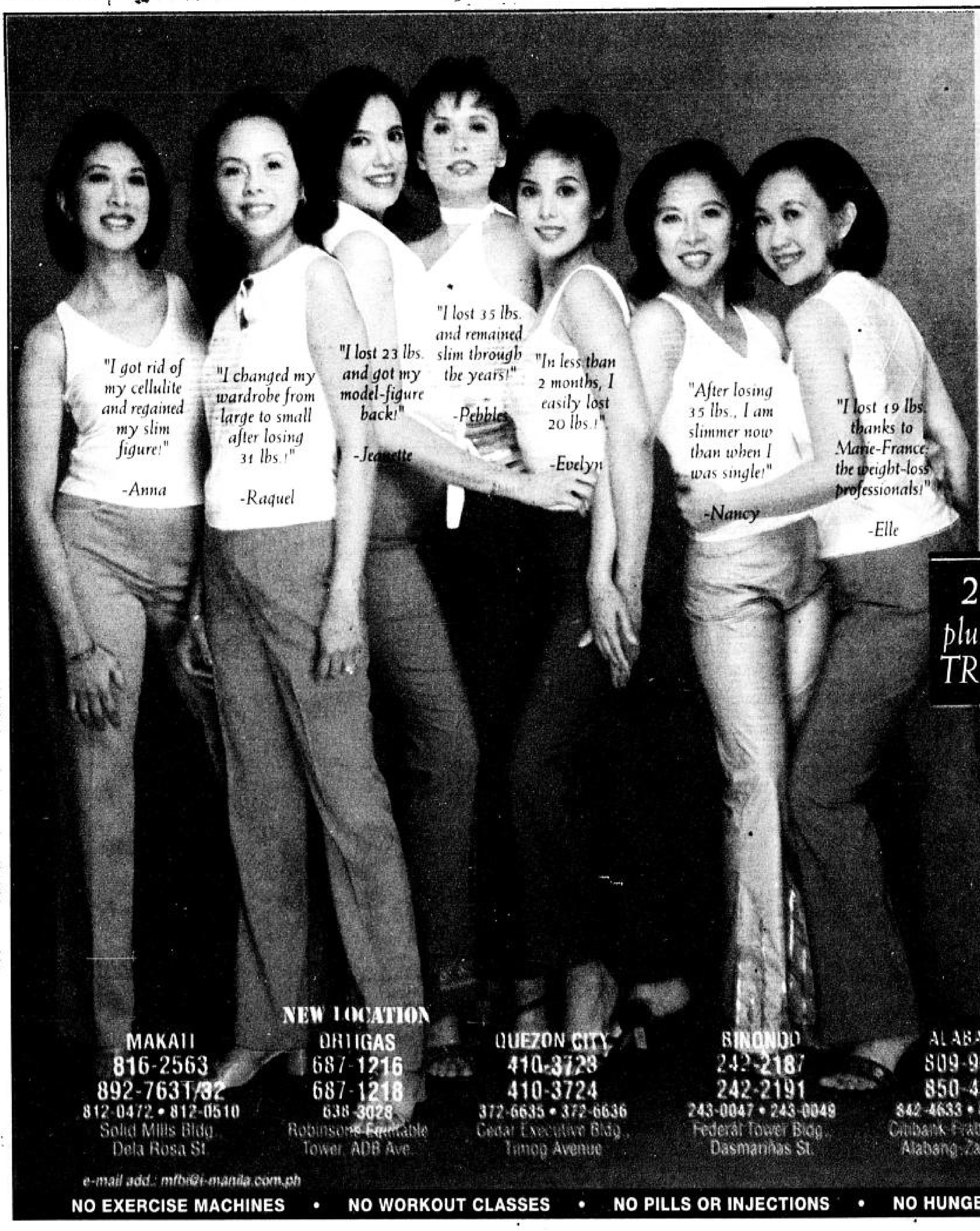
"I got rid of my cellulite and regained my slim figure!" -Anna
"I changed my wardrobe from large to small after losing 31 lbs.!" -Raquel
"I lost 23 lbs. and got my model-figure back!" -Jeanette
"I lost 35 lbs. and remained slim through the years!" -Pebbles
"In less than 2 months, I easily lost 20 lbs.!" -Evelyn
"After losing 35 lbs., I am slimmer now than when I was single!" -Nancy
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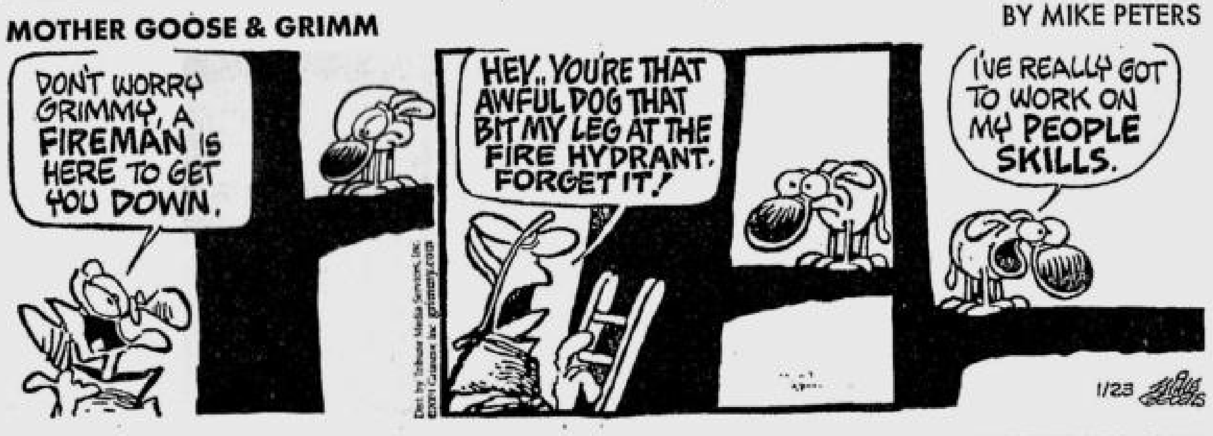
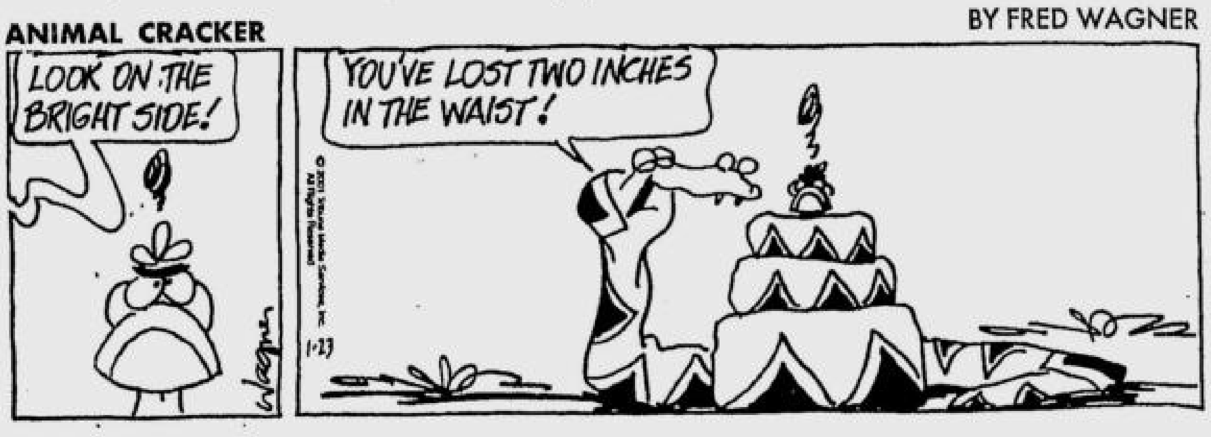
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS


DON'T WORRY GRIMMY, A FIREMAN IS HERE TO GET YOU DOWN.
HEY.. YOU'RE THAT AWFUL DOG THAT BIT MY LEG AT THE FIRE HYDRANT. FORGET IT!
I'VE REALLY GOT TO WORK ON MY PEOPLE SKILLS.
1/23

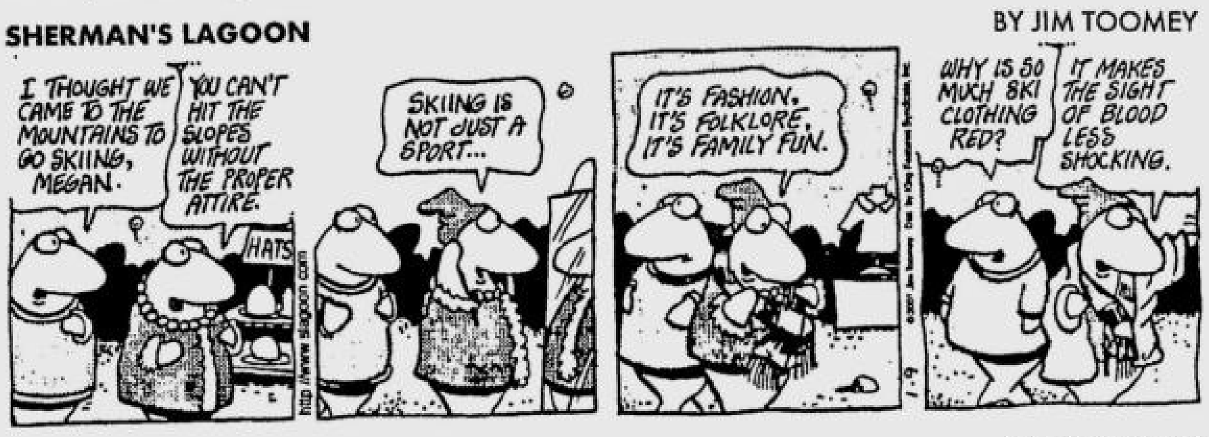
ANIMAL CRACKER

BY FRED WAGNER


LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE!
YOU'VE LOST TWO INCHES IN THE WAIST!
1-23
Wagner

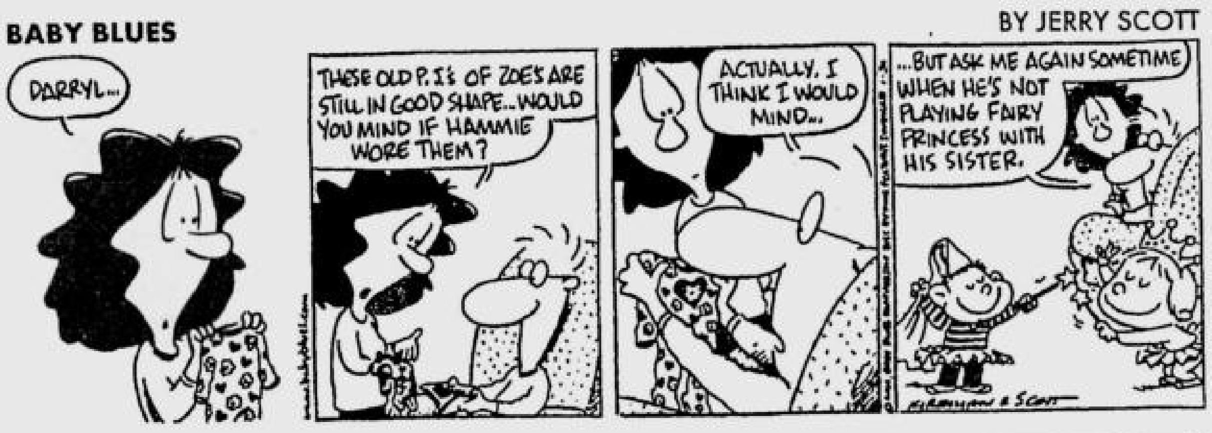
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


I THOUGHT WE CAME TO THE MOUNTAINS TO GO SKIING, MEGAN.
YOU CAN'T HIT THE SLOPES WITHOUT THE PROPER ATTIRE.
HATS
SKIING IS NOT JUST A SPORT...
IT'S FASHION. IT'S FOLKLORE. IT'S FAMILY FUN.
WHY IS SO MUCH SKI CLOTHING RED?
IT MAKES THE SIGHT OF BLOOD LESS SHOCKING.
http://www.slagoon.com
1-9

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


DARRYL...
THESE OLD P.J.'s OF ZOE'S ARE STILL IN GOOD SHAPE... WOULD YOU MIND IF HAMMIE WORE THEM?
ACTUALLY, I THINK I WOULD MIND...
...BUT ASK ME AGAIN SOMETIME WHEN HE'S NOT PLAYING FAIRY PRINCESS WITH HIS SISTER.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Sidney Poitier, Gloria Vanderbilt, Cindy Crawford, Ivana Trump, Robert Altman, Jennifer O'Neill, Andrew Shue, Bobby Unser

Happy Birthday: You will have the vision to take any project to the limit. Success will be yours as long as you stick to your own ideas and don't let anyone stand in your way. Don't rely on others. The more control you have over your life, the better you'll do. Surround yourself with people who believe in your abilities and support your goals. Your numbers: 5, 18, 19, 21, 24, 32

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You need to get out and mingle with those who can help you move ahead. Your involvement in active groups will allow you to demonstrate your leadership qualities.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Do not sign contracts unless you have gone over them with a fine-tooth comb. Others may get the wrong impression if you are too open about your personal concerns.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): You'll be more relaxed and should enjoy creative endeavors or physical fitness programs that will help get you into shape for the summer.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Problems with older members of the family may be a real burden. Try not to overextend yourself at the bank. Unforeseen bills will cause worry and stress.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Romantic relationships should stabilize. Pleasure trips will turn out better than anticipated. You can catch up on your correspondence and reading. Look into unusual forms of entertainment.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Look for that pat on the back. You've done your job well and rewards should follow. If they don't, consider looking for a position with a competitive company.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Long-awaited relationships can begin. You may find that children are not as accepting as you have been. Pamper yourself, you deserve it.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Don't take on the weight of the world. Getting involved in the personal lives of colleagues will be a big mistake. Protect yourself from those who would like to make you look bad.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You need to get away and enjoy yourself. Time spent with close friends or relatives will be relaxing and rejuvenating. Others will admire your progressive mind.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You need to concentrate on getting ahead. Help those less able to take care of their personal papers. You can make extra cash if you look into small investment opportunities.

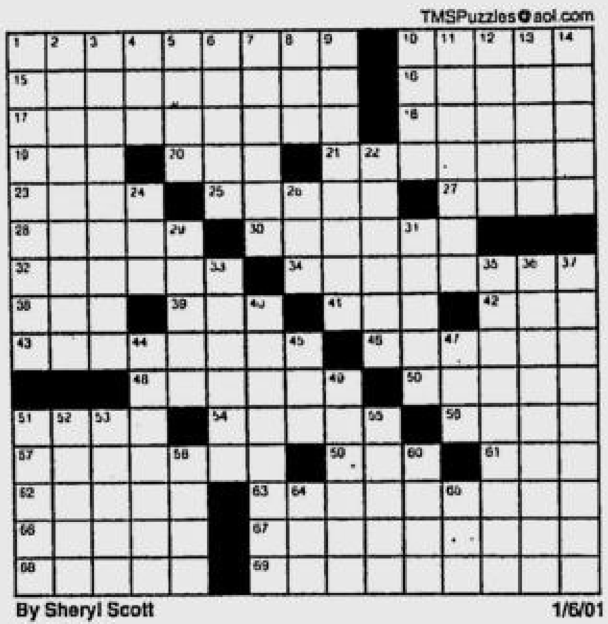
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Don't let your emotions run wild. It is wise to deal with your personal life behind closed doors. Your partner may not realize that he or she is making you feel insecure.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Insincere gestures of friendliness are likely if you allow others to find out about your private life. Don't become involved in a love triangle. Keep your reputation spotless.

Birthday Baby: You have a unique style of doing things that will always draw attention. You are clever, interested in almost everything, and quick to pick up on whatever is going on around you.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com



By Sheryl Scott
Akron, OH

1/6/01

ACROSS
1 Criticize severely
10 T follower?
15 Stances
16 Sharpener
17 Table protectors
18 Willful destruction
19 Hardened
20 Sturdy drinking cup
21 Welty and others
23 Level
25 William and Sean
27 Florida islands
28 Actor Davis
30 Leave the Union
32 Volume identifier
34 Delineators
38 Victorian or Edwardian, e.g.
39 Scarlet or crimson
41 Multipurpose car: abbr.
42 Guys
43 Watchman
46 Lapis __
48 Evidences a response
50 Dinner course
51 Sewer segment
54 Golden-touch king
56 Head
57 Cooked with dry heat
59 Ear-like projection
61 Can metal
62 Make one
63 Serving to instruct
66 Pickle picks
67 Goes, gets and brings back
68 Relaxes
69 Sugary quality

DOWN
1 Culminating achievements
2 When you have the time
3 Respected leader
4 __-tac-toe
5 Single thing
6 Put out of working order
7 Proverbs
8 Hanoi holiday
9 Concentrated substances
10 Roe source
11 Sinatra's birthplace
12 Accustom
13 Repeat oneself
14 Shock or lock
22 Beneficial
24 Chest bone
26 Writer Buntline
29 Spooky
31 Prima donnas
33 Select a pseudonym
35 Equal by imitation
36 Family members
37 Malicious sarcasm
40 Judges
44 Sawhorse
45 Inc. in Blackpool
47 Video-game shot
49 Pay tribute to
51 Bluenose
52 Ancient Greek colony
53 Buckets
55 One of Bolivia's capitals
58 "__ of the d'Urbervilles"
60 Way of moving
64 Dawn lawn layer
65 Half a score

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

C	A	S	A	■	S	C	A	D	S	■	S	M	O	G
A	R	I	D	■	P	A	T	I	O	■	C	A	U	L
L	I	A	M	■	A	B	L	E	R	■	R	O	T	E
F	A	M	O	U	S	L	A	S	T	L	O	R	D	S
■	■	■	N	A	M	E	S	■	■	O	L	I	O	S
T	A	P	I	R	S	■	■	D	I	A	L	■	■	■
A	L	A	S	■	■	S	T	O	R	M	■	L	O	O
C	A	S	H	I	N	O	N	E	S	S	H	I	P	S
H	I	T	■	B	O	A	T	S	■	■	I	K	E	S
■	■	■	R	S	V	P	■	■	S	E	L	E	N	A
U	N	D	U	E	■	■	O	M	E	G	A	■	■	■
P	A	R	T	N	E	R	S	I	N	G	R	I	M	E
S	C	A	T	■	T	O	A	S	T	■	I	D	O	L
E	R	I	E	■	A	U	G	E	R	■	T	E	L	L
T	E	N	D	■	L	E	E	R	Y	■	Y	A	L	E

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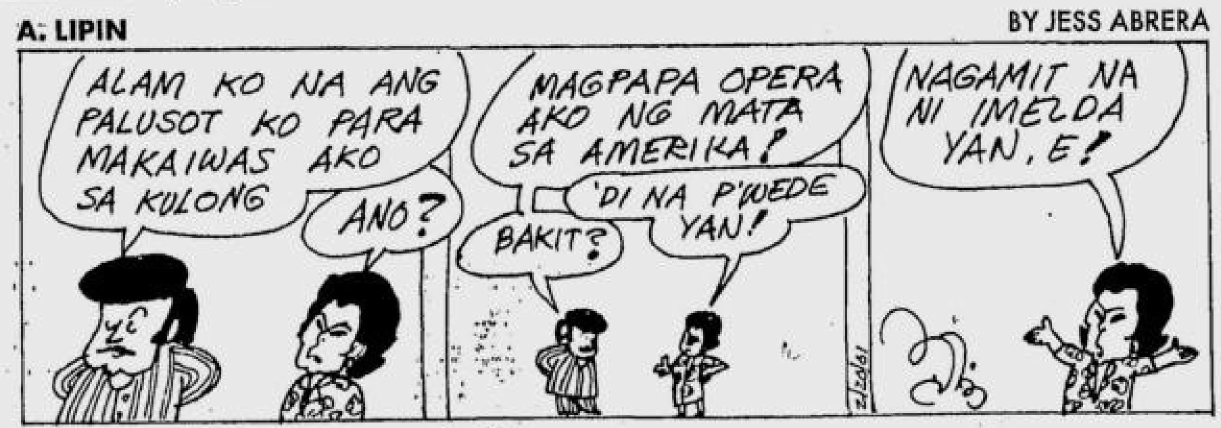
1/6/01

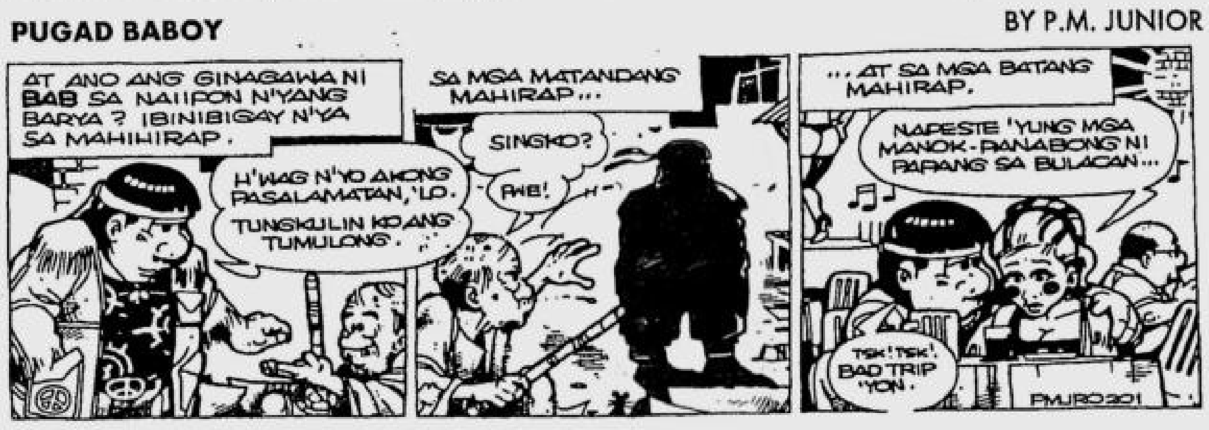
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


ALAM KO NA ANG PALUSOT KO PARA MAKAIWAS AKO SA KULONG
ANO?
MAGPAPA OPERA AKO NG MATA SA AMERIKA!
BAKIT?
'DI NA P'WEDE YAN!
NAGAMIT NA NI IMELDA YAN, E!
2/20/01

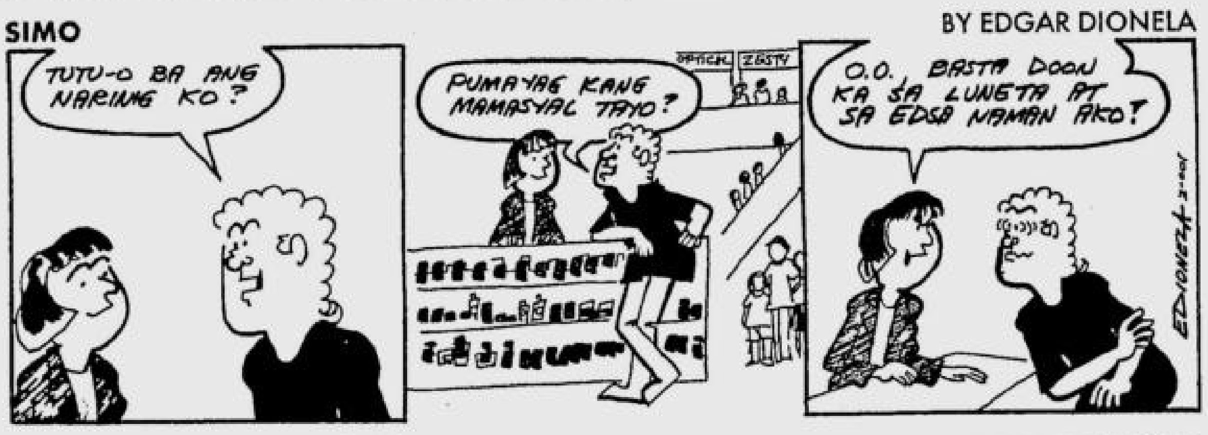
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


AT ANO ANG GINAGAWA NI BAB SA NAIIPON N'YANG BARYA? IBINIBIGAY N'YA SA MAHIHIRAP.
H'WAG N'YO AKONG PASALAMATAN, 'LO.
TUNGKULIN KO ANG TUMULONG.
SA MGA MATANDANG MAHIRAP...
SINGKO?
PHE!
...AT SA MGA BATANG MAHIRAP.
NAPESTE 'YUNG MGA MANOK-PANABONG NI PAPANG SA BULACAN...
TSK! TSK! BAD TRIP 'YON.
PMJR0201

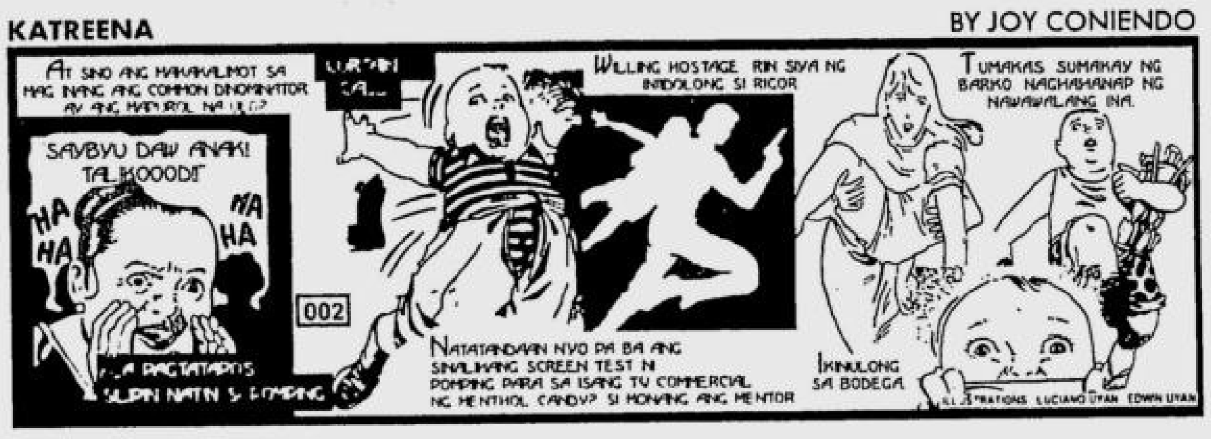
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


TUTU-O BA ANG NARINIG KO?
PUMAYAG KANG MAMASYAL TAYO?
O.O. BASTA DOON KA SA LUNETA AT SA EDSA NAMAN AKO!
EDIONELA

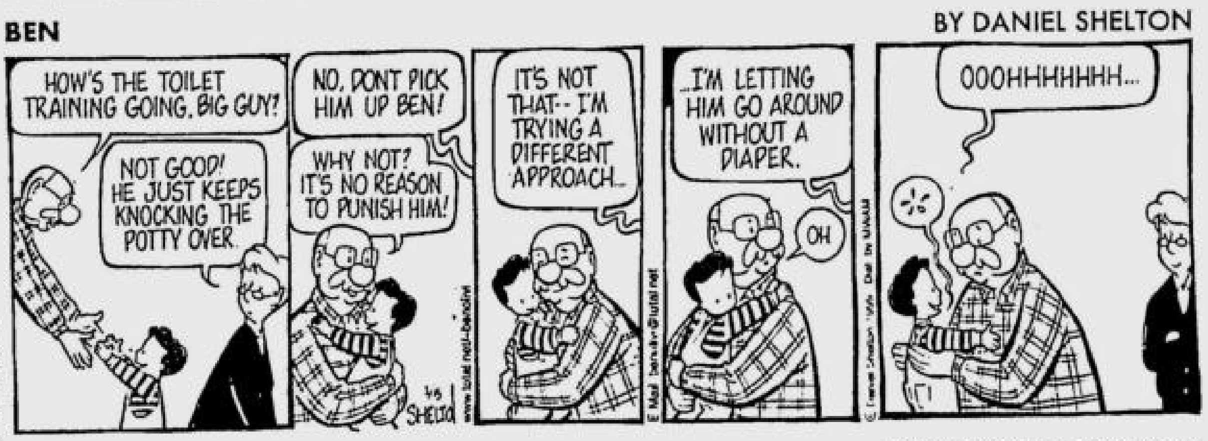
KATREENA

BY JOY CONIENDO


AT SINO ANG MAKAKALIMOT SA MAG INANG ANG COMMON DINOMINATOR AY ANG MAPUROL NA ULO?
SAYBYU DAW ANAK! TALKOOOD!
HA HA HA HA
...A PAGTATAPOS SUPIN NATIN SI POMPING
002
WILLING HOSTAGE RIN SIYA NG INIDOLONG SI RICOR
NATATANDAAN NYO PA BA ANG SINALIHANG SCREEN TEST NI POMPING PARA SA ISANG TV COMMERCIAL NG MENTHOL CANDY? SI MONANG ANG MENTOR
TUMAKAS SUMAKAY NG BARKO NAGHAHANAP NG NAWAWALANG INA.
IKINULONG SA BODEGA
ILLUSTRATIONS LUCIANO UYAN EDWIN UYAN

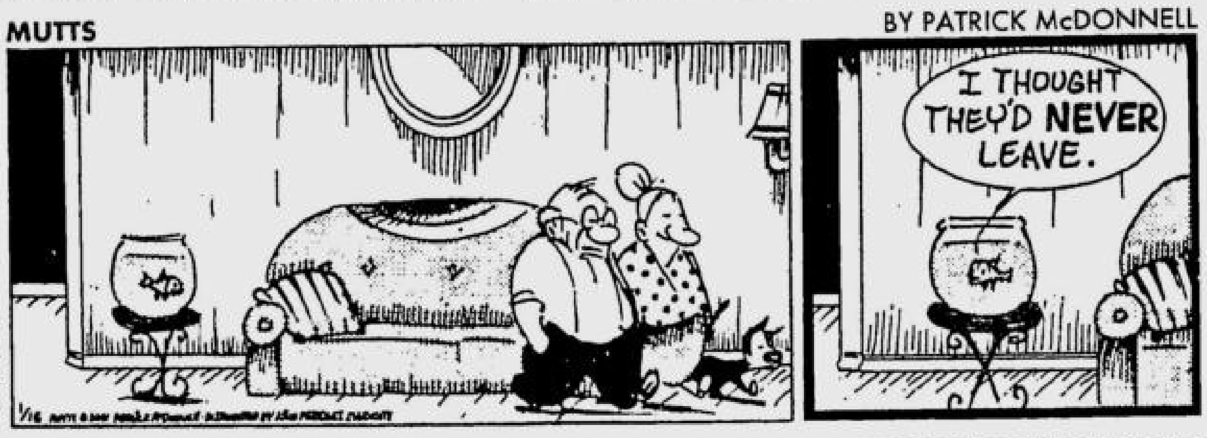
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


HOW'S THE TOILET TRAINING GOING, BIG GUY?
NOT GOOD! HE JUST KEEPS KNOCKING THE POTTY OVER.
NO, DON'T PICK HIM UP BEN!
WHY NOT? IT'S NO REASON TO PUNISH HIM!
IT'S NOT THAT-- I'M TRYING A DIFFERENT APPROACH..
..I'M LETTING HIM GO AROUND WITHOUT A DIAPER.
OH
OOOHHHHHHH...
SHELTON

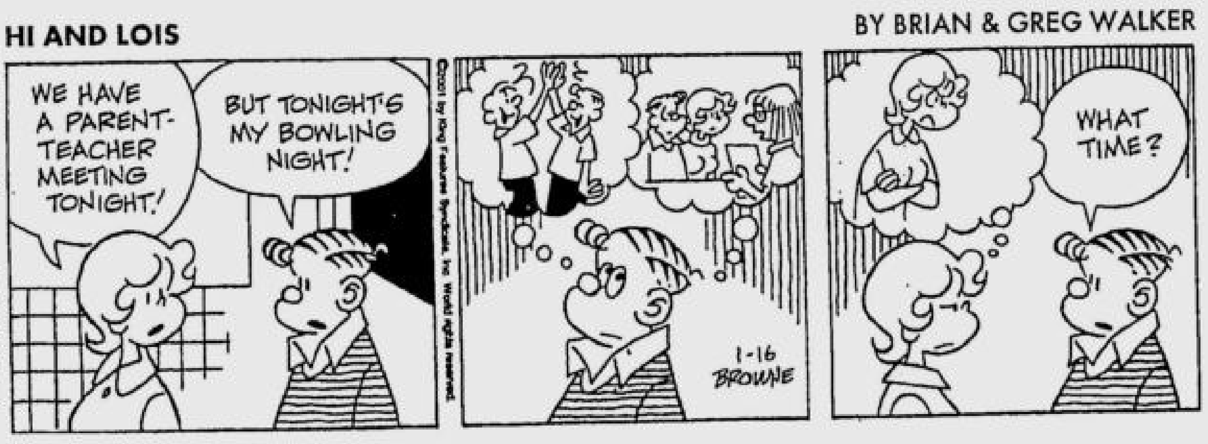
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


I THOUGHT THEY'D NEVER LEAVE.
1/16

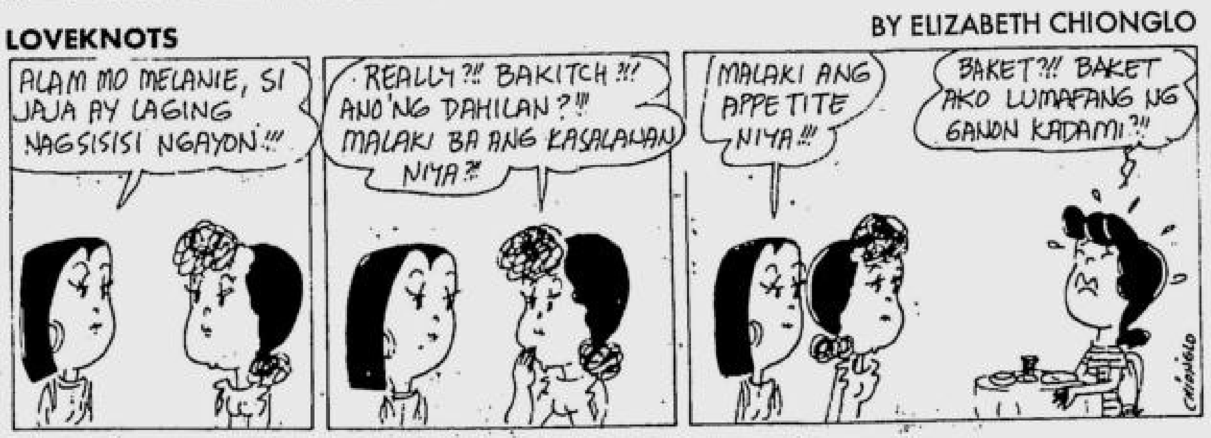
HI AND LOIS

BY BRIAN & GREG WALKER


WE HAVE A PARENT-TEACHER MEETING TONIGHT!
BUT TONIGHT'S MY BOWLING NIGHT!
1-16
BROWNE
WHAT TIME?

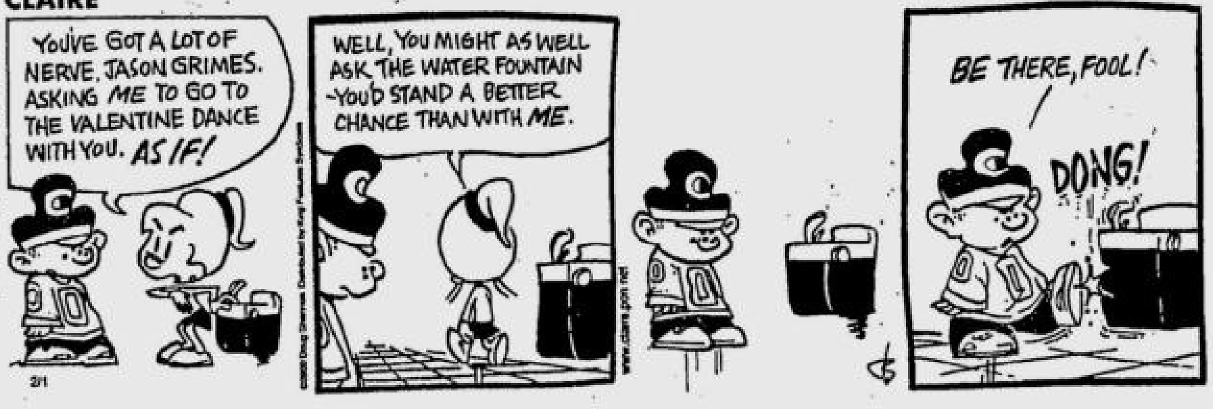
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

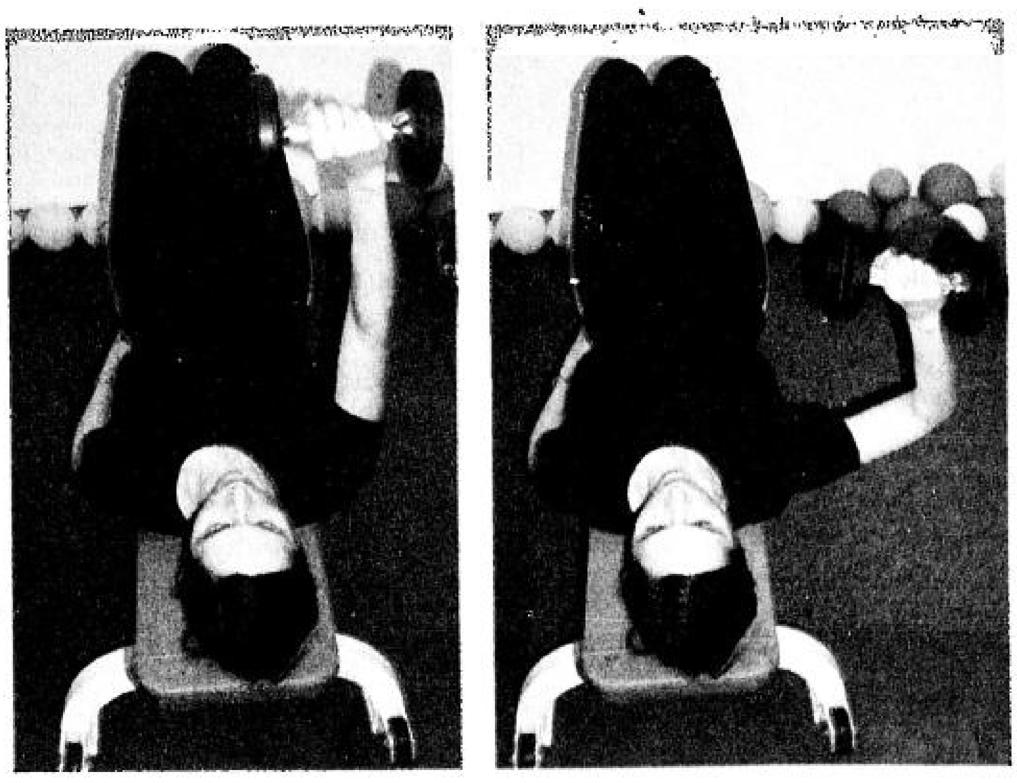

ALAM MO MELANIE, SI JAJA AY LAGING NAGSISISI NGAYON!!!
REALLY?!! BAKITCH?!! ANO'NG DAHILAN?!! MALAKI BA ANG KASALANAN NIYA?!!
MALAKI ANG APPETITE NIYA!!!
BAKET?!! BAKET AKO LUMAFANG NG GANON KADAMI?!!
CHIONGLO

CLAIRE

BY DOUG SHANNON


YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF NERVE, JASON GRIMES. ASKING ME TO GO TO THE VALENTINE DANCE WITH YOU. AS IF!
WELL, YOU MIGHT AS WELL ASK THE WATER FOUNTAIN -YOU'D STAND A BETTER CHANCE THAN WITH ME.
BE THERE, FOOL!
DONG!
2/1

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK



One-arm chest press

STRENGTHENS the muscles of the chest as well as the abdominals.

Equipment:
Gym bench and dumbbells.

Exercise technique:

1. Lie down on a flat gym bench with one dumbbell in your right hand.
2. Bring the dumbbell directly over your right shoulder joint. This is your starting position.
3. Activate the abdominal muscles by tightening them as you lower the dumbbell. Your elbows should not go past your shoulder joint.
4. Slowly press the dumbbell back to starting position.
5. Perform the desired number of repetitions. Repeat on the other side.

Performance tips:

1, Since all the weight is on one side, your abdominal muscles have to work hard to stabilize your torso. Activate the abdominal muscles before you even lower the weight.

2. Use a lighter poundage than what you are accustomed to.

3. Don't be surprised at how hard your abdominal muscles have to work. This type of exercise is excellent at developing core strength.

Repetitions:
Do 12 to 15 repetitions on each side. Rest. Do one or two more sets if you want to.

DSWD announces search for best day-care worker

THE DEPARTMENT of Social Welfare and Development Region III announces this year's "Search for the Best Day-Care Worker."

Now on its eighth year, the search aims to pay tribute to the day-care workers (DCWs) who excel in the field of providing quality care and development to preschool children aged 3-5 years old. It also hopes to recognize the efforts being exerted by the local government units (LGUs) in the promotion of the welfare and development of preschool children through the Day-Care Service.

DSWD Field Office III director Florita R. Villar announced that all accredited LGU day-care workers with a four- and five-star rating could join the search at the municipal level. A province or city can send one nomination to the Regional Day-Care Awards Committee to compete in the regional level.

The nominees shall be judged based on the areas of quantity, quality and the day-care worker's achievements in the field. The criterion on quantity includes the day-care worker's length of service and LGU's stability of support. Under quality, the day-care worker shall be rated based on the number of children served per session; qualities of the day-care worker; physical facilities; and availability and utilization of program materials. The day-care worker's involvement in child-related activities and the ability to tap or mobilize resources for the improvement of the day-care center will also be considered.

The awarding ceremony is slated on April 19 to coincide with the annual assembly of day-care workers of Central Luzon.

Philippine Cerebral Palsy offers free services

THE PHILIPPINE Cerebral Palsy Inc. (PCPI), a nonstock, nonprofit organization at Dao Street, San Antonio Village, Makati, is offering free services such as Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, Special Education Classes and Computer Tutorial for the Handicapped. Open Mondays to Fridays, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. It accepts donations in cash and in kind: therapy equipment, play materials, workshop tools, office equipment, etc. Volunteers are also welcome. Call 899-1947, 895-1701/1786; or e-mail cerebralpalsyinc-@yahoo.com.

WEEKLY DOSAGE

CONVENTION. St. Luke's Medical Center Department of Pediatrics, under the leadership of Dr. Felicitas S. Aguila, is this year's host institution for the Philippine Pediatric Society's (PPS) 38th annual convention dubbed "CyberPediatrics: Maximizing Access to Health Care," April 1-4 at the Philippine International Convention Center, Pasay City.

The convention aims to provide quality pediatric education for its members and friends from other medical and allied medical fields. Preregistration ends Feb. 28. Call the Philippine Pediatric Society Secretariat at 926-6758 to 59 and St. Luke's Medical Center Convention Secretariat at 726-1955 or 723-0301, local 6528.

FITNESS ACTIVITIES. SNACK 2001 (Summer Nature and Arts Camp for Kids) will hold its yearly outdoor live-in camp on April 2-7 at the Taal Lake Yacht Club in Talisay, Batangas. SNACK was launched in 1999 and immediately lauded for providing an alternative summer activity to computer games, television cartoons and malling. Activities include sailing, kayaking, basic mountaineering, archery, arts and crafts, stargazing, and the LUBID teambuilding adventure games. Call 721-0801 or 724-1762.

FOR THAT DAILY CLEAN FEELING

KIMBERLY-CLARK Philippines Inc. introduces new Kotex Fresh Breathable Pantiliners. Kotex Fresh is a range of breathable pantiliners to suit every woman's need to feel fresh, clean and confident every day. It is the first and only pantiliner brand to have a 100-percent cotton cover variant. Kotex Fresh Breathable Pantiliners is now available at leading supermarkets nationwide.

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Weight-control clichés to live by

(From page C1)

"wave" without giving in to the craving, you will discover that, most of the time, you don't want whatever you were craving for anymore. However, for this to work, you have to keep yourself distracted for 15 to 20 minutes. Tell yourself that if you really want that chocolate bar or bag of potato chips, you can have it but only after 15 minutes. Keep in mind that you are not depriving yourself. You are just giving yourself a chance to decide whether you really want that high-calorie snack (or second serving) or not. Giving in to impulses the minute you feel them is not a wise thing to do whether it concerns food or other things in life, like wanting to smack the face of the person you are arguing with. Giving yourself time to calm down is always a good idea before making a decision.

Eat as if you were not exercising; exercise as if you were overeating

The biggest mistake I see people make concerning exercise and weight loss is they think they can eat as much as they want because they are "burning" the calories away with exercise. Unfortunately, studies show that people usually underestimate what they eat and overestimate how much they exercise. This means your calories in/calories out equation will usually be off-balance. I have to keep reminding myself of this because I am also tempted many times to have that second serving of whatever because "anyway, I will burn it off tomorrow."

Skillpower is better than willpower

This is another gem from Stephen Gullo. To depend on willpower when it comes to food or exercise is very foolish because hunger is a primitive instinct and we have an inborn tendency toward sloth. It is much better to use your "skillpower" to prevent temptation from happening in the first place ("out of sight, out of mind") or to motivate you to do the right thing (exercise with a buddy). Plan your way to success. For example, bring healthy *baon* to work so you have the right stuff to snack on or prepare your workout clothes the night before so you have fewer excuses not to exercise the next day.

Food is not the enemy and exercise is not punishment

Long ago, when I struggled unsuccessfully with my weight, one of my problems was my attitude toward food and exercise. Food was the enemy that I had a love-hate relationship with every day and exercise was my punishment for overeating. What a miserable state I was in. It took me quite a while to realize that food and exercise are God-given gifts to nourish and strengthen my body. It was only when I began to enjoy my food within healthy limits and enjoy my exercise time as a way to relieve stress and anxiety that the weight finally came off—safely, slowly and permanently.

Tomorrow is another day

A reader told me about this one. She was actually on one of those fad diets that are not too healthy for you in the long term but also have a few good points. The good thing she learned from this diet is you don't have to scarf down the entire pizza as if today was your last day on earth. There will always be another day for you to enjoy pizza. So eat moderately today because, like Scarlet O'Hara said in "Gone with the Wind," "Tomorrow is another day."

Eat slowly, eat less; eat quickly, eat more

When I eat slowly, I eat less because I take the time to really savor my food. My taste buds are satisfied and my stomach tells me when I am full. When I eat quickly, I hardly taste my food and I can eat two servings, one right after the other, without even realizing that I am already full.

Feed your stomach 'physical' food; feed your heart 'emotional' food

One thing I learned from my experience with bulimia is we are not always stomach-hungry, many times we are heart-hungry. I used food to feed my heart when I was depressed, angry, hurt, sad or bored. What my heart really needed was time to pray, talk things over with a good friend, or curl up with a meaningful book. Over the years, I have learned to listen closely to my body and determine whether it is my stomach or my heart that needs "feeding."

Do not go hungry

I don't know about you, but when I am hungry, I have absolutely no control. I will eat just about anything you put in front of me and in large quantities, too. Therefore, I make it a point not to go hungry. This means I need a snack (like a fruit, whole wheat bread, or a glass of skim milk) at 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. That way, I am in control during lunch and dinner.

The devil is in the details

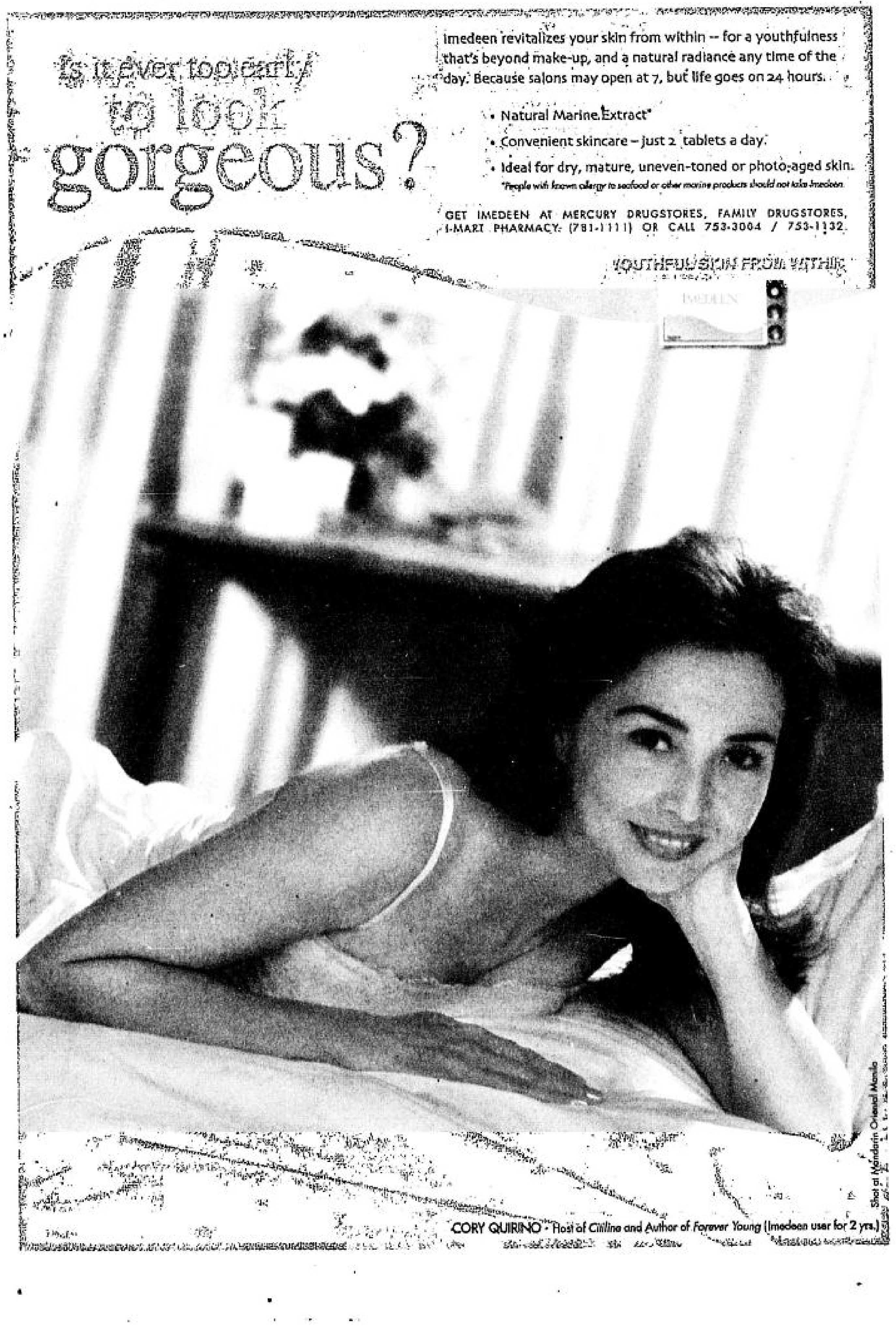
This works for me because it reminds me that small things count. Like a few cookies every day can add up to a pound or two by the end of the year. It also reminds me to look at nutrition labels because there are many surprises hiding there. What you think is low-calorie or healthy is not always so. I am, by no means, an obsessive calorie watchdog and I don't think anyone should be either. That is a prison cell I have been in and I have no desire to return there. But I have also gone the other extreme and have paid the price.

If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is

I know I advocate the "boring" advice to exercise regularly and eat sensibly but I am human, too and also get tempted to fall for the latest weight-loss gimmick. Who doesn't want the easy way out? Hey, it would suit me just fine to lie down and let the fat "miraculously" melt away from my body. I would love to eat whatever I wanted on an everyday basis. However, I know from experience that human anatomy and physiology being what it is, this is not going to happen no matter how much I wish it did. Whenever you hear about the "ultimate" in fat loss, remember "if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is."

The Association of Fitness Professionals of the Philippines (AFPP) will hold four fitness seminars on Feb. 24 at Balay Kalinaw, UP Diliman, QC. Gym instructor seminar: "Speed and Agility Drills," "Overtraining," "Principles of Endurance Training" and "Understanding the Aging Process." Aerobic instructor seminar: Kickboxing, Pilates, Latin, and Funk Workouts. Gym management seminar: "Increasing Your Club's Leads," "Business 101," "Preparing for a Change" and "Hiring Evaluation Systems." Seminar for the general public: "How to Create Your Own Dance Aerobic Workout," "Shape Up with Rubber Bands" and "Stretch Your Body Workout." Call Lorna at 842-0567, or e-mail fitness.advantage@attglobal.net.

E-mail the author at www.tinajuanfitness.com.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Shot at Mandarin Oriental Manila

Strong ESP is good for business

OLLY Mae, who says she's a frequent reader of this column, sent in the following questions about ESP development, its effect on business and about soul mates.

My mom can see visions through dreams, but doesn't want to develop it because she believes it is bad for business. Is this true?

This is not true at all. I do not know where your mom got that idea. On the contrary, it has been dis-

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

covered by scientists that strong ESP possessed by top executives is good for business.

In the '70s, two researchers from the University of Newark, namely John Mihalasky and Douglas Dean, conducted a scientific study to determine whether there is any connection between ESP ability and profitability in business. They asked a group of top executives to guess the outcome of randomly generated numbers. Those who scored high on this ESP test of precognition were running companies that doubled their profitability in five years' time. Those who scored low on ESP ability were running companies that were either average in profitability or losing money.

So how can one say that developing one's ESP is bad for business?

What books should I read to develop my ESP?

I would, of course, recommend first of all that you begin with my books. They are available in all National Bookstores, Power-Books, and two of them at the De La Salle Press.

There are other books I bought in the local bookstores several years ago. I don't know if they are still available now, namely: "Edgar Cayce on ESP" by Doris Agee, "Developing Your ESP" by Harold Sherman and "Natural ESP" by Ingo Swann. Check the stores for other titles.

What type of meditation is best suited for the development of ESP, since you said in one of your articles that there are different meditations for different purposes?

There are two types of meditation I recommend for developing psychic powers. One is the Chakra meditation, which will open up your psychic centers fast, and the other is the dynamic meditation I teach in my ESP course. There is a tape on Chakra meditation which is available in our office. Try the bookstores, too.

How do you know what kind of ESP is right for you or is destined to be yours?

I think you misunderstand the nature of ESP. Let me explain as clearly as I can.

This so-called ESP or psychic ability is a natural activity of our inner mind or inner faculties. All of us have such a capacity, although some have stronger ESP than others. This ability manifests in various ways. For example, if your sense of sight is highly developed, you'll be clairvoyant, if your sense of hearing is the one developed, you'll be clairaudient. Some psychics are good in automatic writing or in contacting the spirit world but may not be good at predicting the future, etc.

It all depends on the individual inclinations or desires. You may choose to develop the type of psychic ability that you have a strong inclination for and not one which you just happen to like. "Know thyself" has always been the advice of the ancient Greek philosophers and the mystics of the East.

I would like to learn healing and reading thoughts, but I would like to be able to control it.

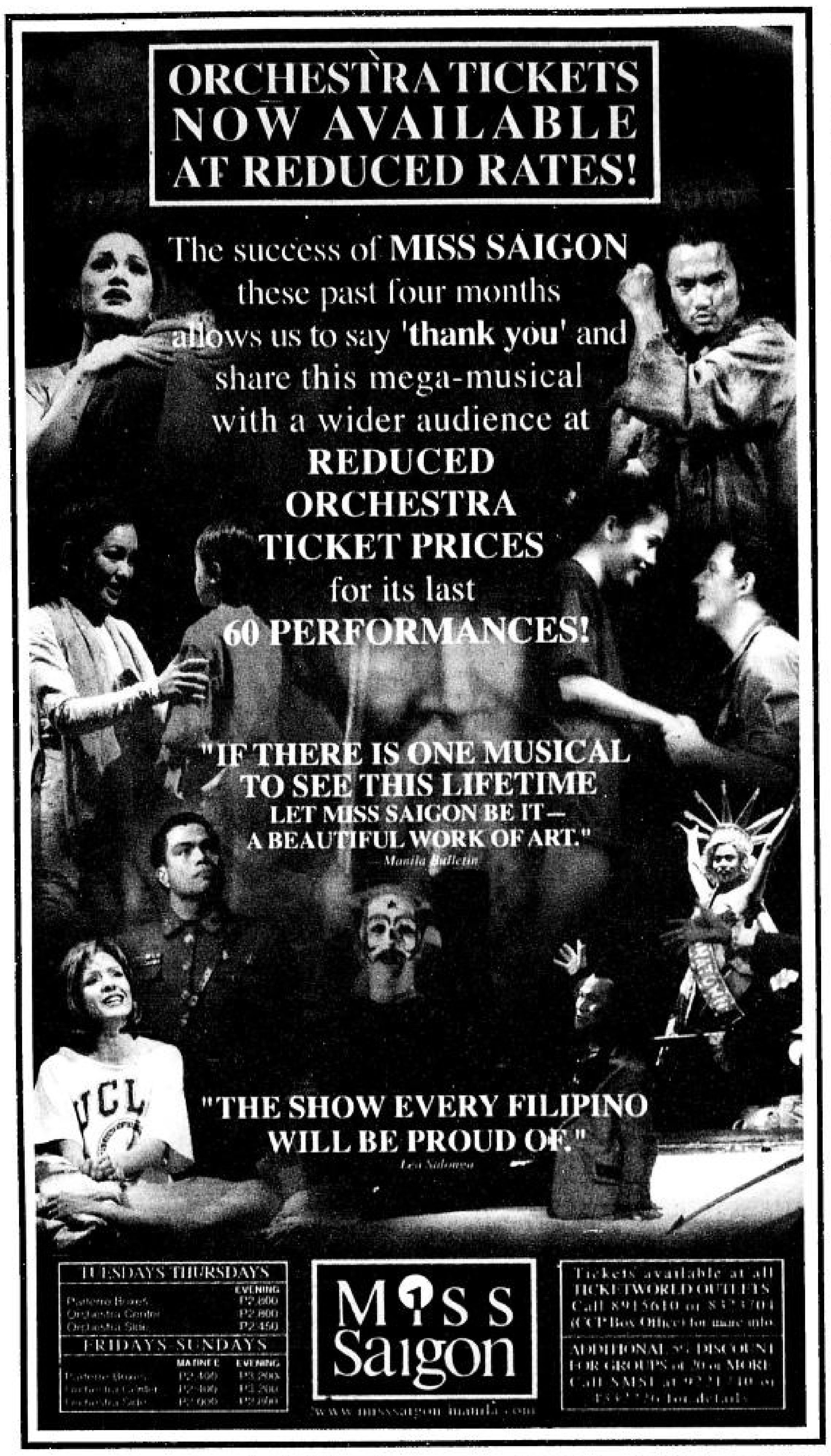
If you develop your ESP in a systematic and scientific way, you will be able to control it. Sometimes, however, one's psychic powers suddenly appear after a physical injury, accident, or emotional trauma. Then it takes time to gain control over them. Others are natural psychics with very strong ability at birth. Again there is need to control such powers, so it won't harm you or others.

Healing is an entirely different ball game. But psychic healing is a psychic ability and should be developed the same way as other psychic talents. There are, of course, many other forms of healing. You should watch yourself to find out which type of healing is best suited for you to develop.

How do you know if a person is your soulmate? Are the people you associate with today also those you've associated with in the past?

These are questions I've answered in this column several times before. They are also discussed in my book "Soul Mates, Karma and Reincarnation" which is available in leading bookstores in Metro Manila. I suggest you get a copy for a detailed explanation of the questions you've asked above.

Address letters to this column to Room 308 Prince Plaza I, 106 Legaspi St., Greenbelt, Makati City or e-mail jlicauco@geocities.com. Visit www.angelfire.com/journal/licauco. Listen to my dzMM radio program every Sunday at 6-8 p.m.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